English naval strategy and maritime trade in the Caribbrean, 1793 - 1802.

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ENGLISH NAVAL STRATEGY AND MARITIME TRADE IN THE CARIBBEAN, 1793 - 1802.

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Events on the Leeward Islands and Jamaica stations during the period are first described. Main interest is centred upon the attempts to regain possession of the French colony of Guadeloupe and the long and costly campaign in San Domingo. Underlying the narrative is an assessment of the strategy pursued by the various station admirals and the problems which they faced, with the limited resources at their disposal.

Caribbean maritime trade occupies the middle chapters. A study of the ships and commodities involved in the trade is prefaced by a description of the convoy system in operation. The importance of the West India interest in London and the outports is emphasized. There follows an account of the illicit trade in the Caribbean and the unending struggle against the enemy privateers.

The final chapters shew how the ultimate responsibility for British strategy in the Caribbean lay with the Admiralty and Cabinet in London. At the Admiralty, the differing abilities of Chatham, Spencer and Middleton are contrasted. On the political side, it was the deliberations of the Cabinet which shaped strategy in the Caribbean. Full prominence has been given to the decisive part played there by the Secretary for War, Henry Dundas.

The main theme of the study is an attempt to shew that the station commanders were well aware of the true situation in the Caribbean but lacked the powers to provide a remedy. The Admiralty and Cabinet, on the other hand, had the powers but failed to really understand the situation.

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CHAPTER 1

THE LEEWARD ISLANDS STATION, 1793 - 1798

On the outbreak of the Revolutionary War in February 1793, British strategy in the Caribbean lay in the hands of two widely-separated naval and military commands, based on Jamaica and the Leeward Islands. The division had been made fifty years before, in belated recognition of geographical fact.[1] Over a thousand miles of difficult waters separated Jamaica from the Lesser Antilles, and the prevailing north-east trade winds hampered communication between the two. Against them, ships under sail wasted many days beating back to windward.

The Leewards command comprised a chain of British colonies, stretching in a seven hundred mile arc from the Virgin Islands to Grenada in the Windwards group. The chain was broken in three places by the French-held islands of Guadeloups, Martinique and St Lucia, for whose possession many of the operations during the period were to be concerned. By their size and weatherly position, Guadeloupe and Martinique dominated the neighbouring British islands. Guadeloupe was the largest in the chain and ideally situated to threaten Antigua and St Kitts-Nevis to the north and north-west, and

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1. In October 1743, the Leeward Islands became a separate station from Jamaica, under its own commander-in-chief. Richmond, Admiral Sir H.W.: 'The Navy in the War of 1739 - 48', vol. I, p. 241.

Dominica immediately to the south. With Fort Royal, Martinique possessed the finest fleet anchorage in the Caribbean,[2] and the harbour of Castries on St Lucia was little inferior. The indented coastlines of all three islands provided numerous sheltered creeks and estuaries for enemy privateers.

By comparison, the British colonies were strategically less favoured. Although situated well to the east of the main chain, and therefore the most weatherly island in relation to the prevailing winds, Barbados lacked a good harbour. To convoys and warships coming in from the Atlantic, it could only offer the open roadstead of Carlisle Bay, a dangerous place for crowded shipping during the hurricane season. The Leewards squadron main base was at English Harbour on the island of Antigua. Here there were limited dockyard facilities,[3] but the anchorage was rather small and hampered by an awkward approach through shallows. Moreover, Antigua was on the extreme northern boundary of the station and the possession of a central naval base for the command was only obtained after the capture of Martinique in March 1794.[4]

To protect such widely scattered possessions was a

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2. ADM 1/316: Jervis to Philip Stephens, March 25, 1794: '... the bay of Port Royal is a safe anchorage during the hurricane months and excellent carenage; it will contain the whole shipping of Great Britain.'

3. See p. 11

4. See pp. 28-9

a constant problem for the station admiral. Nor was this his only difficulty. Most of the Leeward Islands were small and mountainous. The terrain limited the area of cultivation to the coastal strips. The sugar cane plantations, which gave the islands their great economic importance to Britain, were therefore particularly vulnerable to attack from the sea. This was especially true of the islands of Montserrat, Nevis and St.Christopher. In every island, too, the colonists showed little ability or inclination to defend themselves. Few places were properly fortified and the local militia were poorly armed and generally untrained. The attitude of the negro and Carib population was at best merely indifferent; it became progressively more hostile, as the doctrine of egalitarianism spread from the French islands after 1790.

Military defence of the Leeward Islands was therefore weak and remained so until the despatch of expeditionary forces from England. Their protection accordingly depended very largely upon the station admiral and the ships under his command. When the colonial governors and island assemblies complained of its inadequacy, as they frequently did during the war, they entirely failed to take into account the squadron's many other duties. Between 1793 and 1798, the navy was called upon to take part in fourteen separate campaigns within the command. Several of which lasted for months:-

DATE	CAMPAIGN	DATE	CAMPAIGN
1793:		1795:	
February	Tobago	March - July	Grenada Dominica St Lucia St Vincent
June	Martinique		
1794:		1796:	
February - March	Martinique	April	British Guiana
March - April	St Lucia	May - June	St Lucia
April	Guadeloupe	1797:	
June - December	Guadeloupe	February	Trinidad
		April	Puerto Rico

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Naval support in these amphibious operations did not end with providing escort for the troop transports or covering fire on the landing beaches. For weeks after the initial landings, the station warships were fully occupied with ferrying reinforcements, supplying isolated garrisons and interrupting the enemy's lines of communication at sea. It was a marked feature of the Leewards station during the period that such prolonged assistance to the army strained the squadron's limited sources, to the detriment of its other responsibilities.

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5. For accounts of which, see text of this chapter, [redacted].

As is well known, trade had long been the dominant factor in British Caribbean strategy. Protecting the islands was not enough; the seaborne trade to and from Britain and the local inter-island commerce had also to be safeguarded. The value of Caribbean exports, particularly sugar, rose sharply during the eighteenth century and the economic importance of the colonies to Britain was out of all proportion to their actual size. France was equally aware of their value. Earlier in the century, during both the Seven Years War and the War of American Independence, she had made strenuous efforts to seize control there by frequently despatching raiding squadrons from France.

But this effort could not be repeated in 1793. The Revolution had practically destroyed the officer cadre in the French navy. Ships of the line rotted in harbour; organization disappeared and morale was low. Without a properly equipped fleet available for operations overseas, France fell back upon waging a vigorous "guerre de course" in the Caribbean, using smaller warships and large numbers of privateers. She achieved considerable success with this strategy - making full use of the geographical advantages the Caribbean Sea gave to her privateers and the harbours of the neutral islands as bases.[6] The history of the Leewards command during the period

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6. Especially the islands of St Eustatius, St Martin and St Thomas.

was mainly concerned with the station admirals' efforts to counter the enemy's "guerre de course". If all the French islands, and therefore their naval bases, could not be occupied, the enemy privateers should be blockaded in harbour or hunted and taken at sea. But systematic blockade proved impossible in an area where a thousand creeks sheltered the privateers. The station commanders were therefore compelled to rely on a defensive strategy - the convoy system[7] and the mounting of cruiser patrols along the sea-routes - in order to protect the trade. Even this proved hard to achieve; the station always had too few frigates, sloops and schooners, needed for the task.

Nor did the station commander's responsibilities end with protecting the islands, their seaborne trade and giving amphibious support to the army. He was continually faced with the administrative problem of keeping the squadron fully effective. On a station four thousand miles from England, the maintenance of his ships greatly depended on the efficiency of the local dockyards and their personnel - storekeepers, victualling agents and naval commissioners. Before the outbreak of war, the state of the dockyard at English Harbour, Antigua, was shewn to be far from satisfactory. In 1788 the Government published a report on the overseas establishments of the Navy and Victualling Boards.[8] Amongst its findings was evidence

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7. See chapter 3.

8. Ninth report upon foreign establishments of the Navy and victualling department. May 1788.

that the officer in charge of the Antigua yard had defrauded the Boards of over £3,000 by false entries in the store accounts.[9]

One result of the Government enquiry was to institute the appointment of regular commissioners to administer the overseas yards.[10] A start was made on these lines under a commissioner at English Harbour, but as with all the foreign yards the fluctuations of business in time of war and peace necessitated constant changes.

The facilities available at the Antigua yard were as much a problem as its administration. Because there was no dry-dock, warships had to be laboriously heaved-down before a survey of underwater damage could be made. What this meant in terms of expense and time may be gauged by the repairs to the 50-gun ship Trusty in 1794.[11] These took fifty-one days to complete with the existing facilities at English Harbour at a cost of £1,400, in order to undertake two days work under her bottom. In September 1795 the yard submitted an estimate of £12,000 for the construction of a dry double-dock, big enough to hold a ship-of-the-line and a frigate together.[12] The

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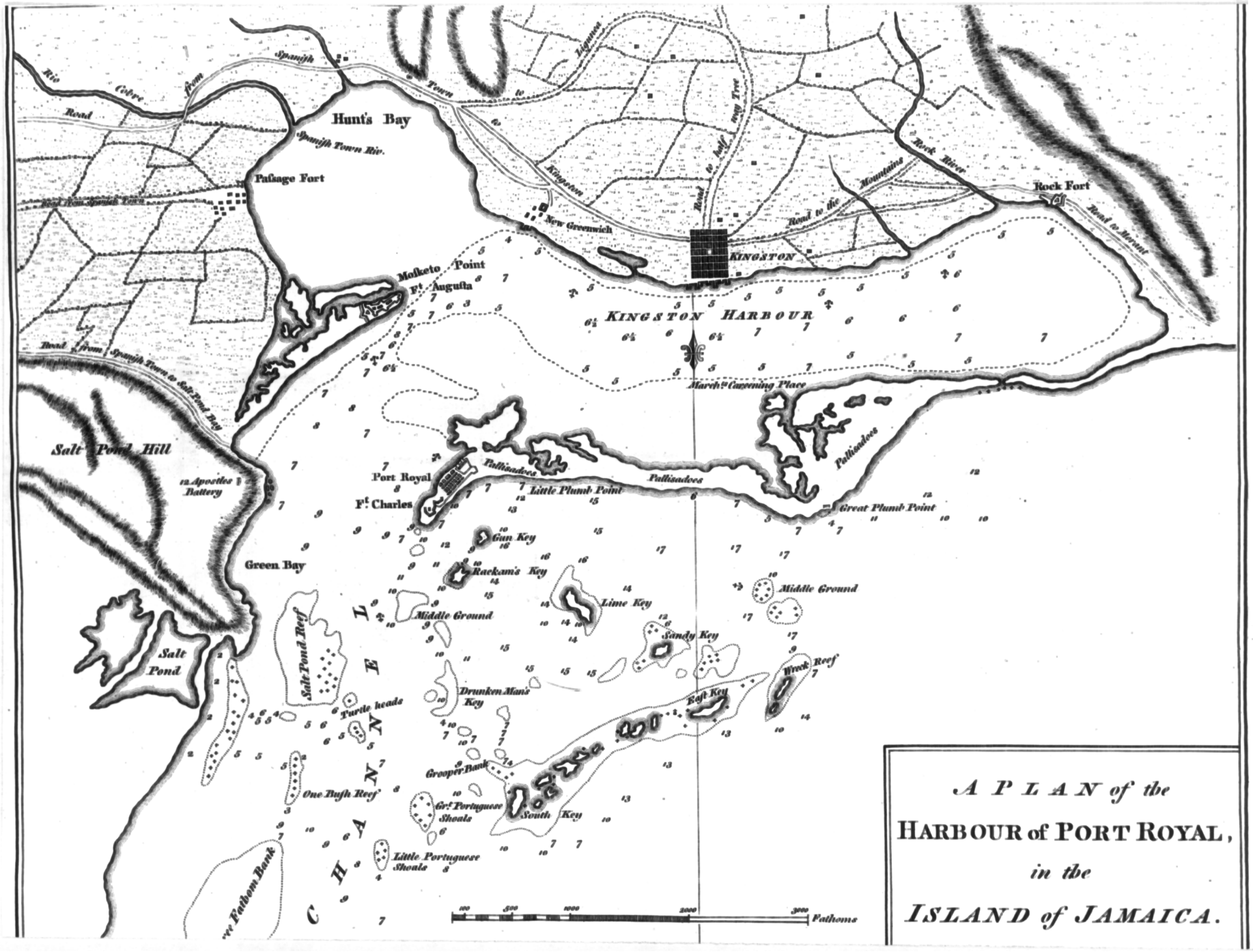
9. Anthony Munton was appointed naval officer, muster-master and storekeeper at English Harbour yard in 1778. The fraud occurred in 1782,

10. Ninth report upon foreign establishments of the Navy and victualling department. May 1788.

11,12. Navy Board Papers. ADM 106/1985. Naval officer, Antigua to the Navy Board, September 16, 1795.



A PLAN of the HARBOUR of PORT ROYAL, in the ISLAND of JAMAICA.

proposal was not approved by the Navy Board until the war was over.

To some extent the difficulties at Antigua were solved by the capture of Martinique in March 1794, which gave the squadron the magnificent fleet anchorage at Fort Royal. Nevertheless, it had also to be properly equipped and maintained; there is plentiful evidence thereafter of quarrels between the officers of both yards as they competed for the limited naval stores available.[13] By 1801, the establishment at the Martinique yard had risen to 130 against 109 at Antigua.[14] But the increase in numbers had little effect upon the frequent lapses which occurred in ship repairs and arrangements for victualling the fleet. '... the ships come out of English Harbour in general so badly fitted they are not able to keep the sea in fine weather and if it blows a little they are springing their masts and yards and splitting their sails ... several anchors were lost at Surinam, by cable that had been surveyed at English Harbour and not condemned ...'[15].

The perennial problem of manning the squadron was accentuated by conditions in the Caribbean: the climate, the wastage of crews by yellow fever and the impossibility of

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13. Navy Board Papers. ADM 106/1985. John Martyr, naval officer, Martinique to the Navy Board, December 23, 1797.

14. Nat. Mar. Mus.: Establishment of Foreign yards, 1801 - 1802.

15. Navy Board Papers: ADM 106/1985. Commodore Samuel Hood to the Navy Board, May 30th, 1804.

obtaining replacements in the islands. The traditional remedy of the press-gang met bitter opposition from colonial governors, merchant ship captains and the entire West India interest. The station admirals therefore resorted to obtaining seamen either from new ships joining the command or from prize crews.[16] The number of the former however never approached the wastage on station. Nor did the system of repatriation of men by cartel prove very satisfactory. Although the Navy had ever since 1761[17] been given control of prize crews overseas, the privilege paid poor dividends. Colonial governors resented the navy's exercise of a monopoly which had once been theirs. Flag-of-truce duty was carried out by frigates and sloops and proved an unnecessary waste of the squadron's limited resources. Moreover, the enemy stood to gain more by the cartel system. Although privateer ships were plentiful, the French found it increasingly difficult to man them. They welcomed therefore an arrangement whereby privateer crews were continuously returned under flag-of-truce.[18]

The problems of the Leeward Islands station which have been outlined were reflected in the Admiralty's Orders and Instructions, issued to each station admiral before his

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16, 18. See article by Richard Pares: 'The Manning of the Navy in the West Indies'. Trans. R.H.S. (Fourth Series) (1937) vol. XX, pp. 31 - 60.

17. By an Order in Council, dated March 1761.

departure from England to take up the command.[19] However, the resemblance ends there. The great distance between England and the West Indies imposed a communications' delay of at least six weeks, sometimes much longer, which seriously weakened the force and relevance of the Admiralty instructions. Although, therefore, strategic policy lay in the hands of Admiralty and Cabinet,[20] much depended on how it was carried out by the commanders on the station. This is made clear by a study of events in the Leeward Islands, between the outbreak of war and its eclipse as a theatre of major operations in 1798.

Vice-Admiral Sir John Laforey was in command of the station in February 1793, having nearly completed the appointment for the normal term of three years. An officer with wide experience of the Caribbean, he had served under Rodney off Martinique in 1762 and later became a naval commissioner at Antigua.[21] Peace-time conditions had reduced his squadron to the pitiful level of one small fourth-rate and three frigates,[22] with which, Laforey had, since 1790,

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19. See for example: ADM 2/123: to Rear-Admiral Gardner, March 10, 1793: Admiralty Orders and Instructions.

20. See chapter 6, p. 271

21. Biographical details in D.N.B. xi, 396; Ralfe i, 231 - 8; Charnock vi, 319 - 26; Naval Chronicle, xxv, 177.

22. ADM 8/68: Admiralty Office: Ship disposition lists show the station strength on January 1, 1792 as:- Trusty, 50; two 32-gun frigates - Blanche, Solebay; one 28, Proserpine; and sloop Fairy, 16. The same source shows that the Perseus, 24, was added in April, 1792 but the Solebay and Proserpine left the station in June and July respectively.

watched an alarming growth of naval and military power on the French islands. A revolt in sympathy with the republican movement in France broke out on Martinique in October 1790[23] and was only put down after the arrival of a strong royalist squadron the following March.[24] An even more serious civil war began on San Domingo in August 1791 and spread to Guadeloupe and Martinique later that year. During 1792, French forces in the Antilles rose to two naval squadrons, including five ships-of-the-line, and over 2,000 troops.[25]

With France and England still at peace, there was no question at this time of a direct clash between these forces and Laforey's squadron. But their presence provided a menace which would become very real once war was declared. Without a squadron strong enough to undertake more than routine station work and an occasional token cruise, Laforey did well to prevent the unrest spreading to the British colonies. An incident on the island of Dominica at the end of 1792 was typical of the

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23. ADM 1/315: Laforey to Stephens, October 29 and November 16, 1790.

24. ADM 1/315: Laforey to Stephens, March 15 and May 17, 1791. The royalist Squadron under Admiral Girardin comprised L'Eole, 74 La Firme, 74; and eight frigates.

25. ADM 1/315: Laforey to Stephens, August 11, 1792 and January 19, 1793. The French squadrons under Admirals Girardin and de Rivière were seldom both in the Caribbean at the same time. They took turns at cruising in North American waters as far north as Virginia.

situation. Placed mid-way between Guadeloupe and Martinique, Dominica attracted refugees fleeing the civil war from both islands. Its governor became alarmed at the evidence of French naval strength in the vicinity and asked Laforey for help. After some delay, the admiral reluctantly agreed to station one of his few frigates off Dominica.[26]

The declaration of war upon France on February 1st, 1793 glaring exposed the weakness of the Leewards squadron. Although four second-line ships were hurriedly sent out during the month,[27] no substantial naval reinforcements came until the arrival of Laforey's successor in May. For the first five months of the war therefore the Leeward Islands were vulnerable and must have succumbed had the enemy been free to act. But the struggle between the royalists and republicans in the French colonies continued unabated; the military and naval forces were turned against themselves and not against England. In January, for instance, one of the French squadrons commanded by the royalist Admiral Rivière sailed to Trinidad to offer its services to Spain.[28]

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26. WO 6/7: Brigadier-General Bruce (governor of Dominica) to Laforey, December 2, 1792.

27. ADM 8/68: Admiralty Office: Ship lists. February 1793. One fourth-rate, Centurion, 50 and two fifth-rates, Experiment and Woolwich, 44s, sailed from England for the Leeward Islands on February 26. The sloop Nautilus, 16, sailed on February 6 for the same destination.

28. ADM 1/315: Laforey to Stephens, January 19, 1793.

The revolt in the French islands prompted the British government to act in the Caribbean. Here was an opportunity to regain the British colonies ceded at the end of previous wars[29] and perhaps to seize the French possessions. The moment seemed opportune in March, since Laforey was able to report that: '... La Félicité[30] with some small armed vessels is the only sea-force belonging to France in these seas at present'.[31] Initially, however, only operations within the compass of the small local forces could be contemplated. Tobago was chosen as the first objective, for political and strategic, rather than economic reasons. It was the only British West Indian island, lost during the American War of Independence, which had not been restored at the Peace of Versailles. Lying to windward of Spanish-held Trinidad, it commanded the sea-passage between Grenada and the mainland.

On April 12th, 500 troops under Major-General Cuyler embarked on transports at Bridgetown, Barbados, set sail under the escort of Laforey's squadron and three days later landed at Great Courland Bay, Tobago. They met little enemy

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29. St Lucia - conquered during the Seven Years' War and returned to France at the Treaty of Paris, 1763.
Tobago - retained by France at the Peace of Versailles, 1783.

30. A frigate.

31. ADM 1/316: Laforey to Stephens, March 14, 1793.

resistance and the campaign was over in two days.[32] In character it was quite unlike the amphibious operations which were to follow. The French inability to intervene, the entirely local composition of the expedition and its easily-won success, gave a false sense of optimism for the future.

For the moment, however, Rear-Admiral Alan Gardner's arrival at the end of April to take over the command seemed to promise further successes. He brought with him from England a powerful squadron of seven ships of the line and three frigates,[33] which at once altered the naval balance of power in the theatre. Gardner was an experienced commander, a member of the Board of Admiralty and knew the Caribbean as well as his predecessor.[34] He shared the Government view that such a force could take advantage of the French unrest to seize the first major objective, the island of Martinique. The Governor of Barbados, Lieutenant-General Bruce, who had been chosen military commander of the expedition, was also at first optimistic of the outcome.

Two other circumstances favoured the enterprise.

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32. There are accounts of the campaign in:- Cardew, F.G.: 'The Taking of Tobago, 1793'. J.R.U.S.I. LXX (1925), 411-5. and William James: The Naval History of Great Britain ... (1837), vol. i, p. 127.

33. ADM 8/69: Admiralty Office. List Book: May 1793. Gardner's squadron comprised: the Queen, 90 (flagship); Duke, 90; Culloden, Hector, Hannibal, Monarch, and Orion, 74's; and three frigates: Hermione, Solebay and Iphigenia, 32's.

34. Biographical details in: D.N.B. vii, 870; Ralfe i, 407-12; Charnock vi, 583.

Late in February the Admiralty learned that an enemy squadron was about to sail from Brest, with Martinique as its most probable destination. The intelligence was an additional reason for the despatch of Gardner. Admiral de Sercey however did not leave Brest until April 8 and he steered for San Domingo.[35] Although Gardner on passage across the Atlantic happened to make distant contact with the enemy ships, neither on this occasion nor indeed until June 1794 did a French squadron appear in the Leeward Islands.[36] The second bonus came from an unexpected quarter. Having failed to come to terms with the Spaniards at Trinidad, the royalist Admiral de Rivière suddenly appeared off Barbados early in May with an offer to surrender his squadron. After an exchange of letters between Gardner and de Rivière, it was agreed that the royalist ships should fight alongside the station squadron provided they retained their separate identity.

In spite of such an auspicious opening, the expedition against Martinique was doomed to failure. The cardinal error was made of supposing that a large well-garrisoned island could be conquered and held, without the use of a considerable number

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35. Six, Georges: 'Dictionnaire Biographique ... Amiraux Français ... ' (1792 - 1814), ii, 448 - 9.

36. ADM 1/316: Gardner to Stephens, April 29, 1793. The frigate Iphigenia reported sighting an enemy squadron in mid-Atlantic on April 17.

of troops. No expeditionary force could be expected from England for many months. If the attack, therefore, was to be made before the enemy had had time to recover, it would have to be delivered by Gardner's squadron and the small local forces. It was hoped also the task would be made easier by support from the French royalist exiles and by disaffection on Martinique itself.

Gardner gave no indication in print of his feelings about the expedition. But the lack of protest in his journal in which as a member of the Admiralty Board he could have expressed himself forcibly - suggests that he believed naval superiority alone would be sufficient. Understandably the military commander, General Bruce, was less confident and asked for warships to be sent to scour the islands in the hope of recruiting more soldiers. Gardner gave his reluctant consent, but the results proved very disappointing.[37] Great reliance had therefore to be placed on the French royalist auxiliaries, who comprised nearly half the military force. Their leaders, notably the untrustworthy Charmilly, had first encouraged the British Government to attack Martinique, even suggesting that eight hundred troops would be sufficient for the purpose. The local commanders in the Caribbean certainly did not share the confidence which Dundas, the Secretary for

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37. ADM 1/316: Gardner to Stephens, May 16, 1793.

War, placed in the royalists.[38]

Events fully justified their doubts. Nineteen hundred troops landed at Martinique on June 14, their transports having been escorted from Barbados by Gardner's squadron without incident. But in the face of determined resistance by the republican garrison, supported by negro levies, the royalists turned and fled and the operation was completely abandoned after eight days.[39] The repulse permanently discredited the royalists and gave the first warning of the climate's effect upon the fighting capabilities of the British troops. It showed, too, the immense value of negro auxiliaries, whose resistance to climate and fever more than compensated for their lack of military training.

The naval aspect of the operation also gave little cause for satisfaction. On two occasions Gardner found his ships unable to silence the fixed enemy batteries by bombardment. The smaller vessels carried guns of insufficient calibre, while the size and unmanoeuvrability of the ships-of-the-line in restricted waters offered easy targets. Several were damaged, particularly in the rigging, and their speedy repair was no easy matter from the limited facilities of the Antigua

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38. Fortescue ... History of the British Army, vol. iv (part i) p. 34.

39. The fullest contemporary description of the Martinique campaign is in: Cooper Willyams': 'An account of the campaign in the West Indies in the year 1794 ... ' (London 1796).

yard.[40] But the main lesson of the operation was the need for bomb-vessels. Of shallow draught and mounting two mortars amidships, they were the ideal weapon against shore batteries. On the other hand, their specialized function and slow speed discouraged their general use on overseas stations. The mortars could only be operated by trained artillerymen and each bomb needed a tender to carry its ammunition; both factors which made their maintenance a problem for local yards. Bomb-vessels in fact did not appear in the Leeward Islands, until expeditionary forces were specifically assembled and sent from England.[41]

Following the failure against Martinique, Gardner was made the scapegoat of the Government's mistakes. After less than five months in command, he was ordered to return home with the trade convoy on August 1st.[42] Late in the day, the Government had begun to realize that only the despatch from England of a large expeditionary force, well equipped in every department, would gain the objectives they sought. The officer chosen to lead the naval part of the expedition and to succeed Gardner, was Vice-Admiral Sir John Jervis.[43] He

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40. q.v. ante, pp. 11-12.

41. See pp. 17 (Jervis expedition); 33 (key to map 1).

42. ADM 2/124: Admiralty Orders and Instructions. Stephens to Gardner, July 1, 1793.

43. Biographical details in: Tucker, J.S.: 'Memoirs of ... the Earl of St. Vincent' (2 vols.; 1844); D.N.B., x, 792 - 800; Ralfe i, 277 - 318; Charnock, vi, 406 - 416.

had already given proof of great ability and it was during his command of the Leewards station, November 1793 to November 1794, that a series of striking successes were obtained.

Many difficulties had first to be overcome however, which were only solved by the joint determination and co-operation of Jervis and his colleague in charge of the military forces, Lieutenant-General Sir Charles Grey. From the outset they had to contend with delay and muddle in organizing the expedition at Portsmouth and Spithead. The original intention was that it should sail at the beginning of October, soon after Gardner's arrival back in England. In this way campaigning in the West Indies could have begun at the best time - during the cool season and when the risk of hurricanes was over. But events in Europe not only delayed the start of the expedition but substantially reduced its numbers.[44] As a result, although Jervis hoisted his flag at Portsmouth on October 3rd, the main expeditionary force did not sail for the West Indies until November 26th, and the stragglers until early in December.[45] Moreover, although Grey had originally been promised 14 regiments, which with the flank companies and artillerymen amounted to nearly 11,000 men, by the time

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44. See chapter 6, pp. 282-3.

45. ADM 1/316: Jervis to Stephens, December 12 and 14, 1793.

the needs of the operations in Flanders and at Toulon had been satisfied,[46] only 6,000 remained for the Caribbean expedition.[47]

Nor were the difficulties only military; Jervis was equally perturbed about the size and composition of the naval force.[48] After Gardner's return to England with practically his whole squadron, only the Experiment, 44, the frigates Beaulieu and Blanche and sloops Rattlesnake and Solebay remained in the Leeward Islands. Although French naval strength had indeed declined there, Jervis rightly felt that the scale of the forthcoming operations entitled him to have under his command a squadron at least equal to the seven ships-of-the-line which his predecessor had had. Owing to commitments elsewhere, the Admiralty could only give him three, or

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46. See chapter 6, pp. 282-3.

47. 'Facts relative to the conduct of the war in the West Indies; collected from the speech of the Rt. Hon. Henry Dundas in the House of Commons on 28th April 1796...' (London; J. Owen; 1796)

- Appendix No. 1: 'Account of men for Grey's expedition ...

14 regiments @ 600 rank & file each	= 8,400
flank companies of same	= 1,960
artillery & artificers	= 400
	=10,760

- Appendix No. 4 shows that only 6,118 troops actually sailed in November.

48. ADM 8/69: Admiralty Office-list books: November 1793 - show that Jervis ultimately sailed with 3 ships-of-the-line, 2 44's, 2 frigates, 2 sloops, a storeship and a bomb-vessel under his command. One more frigate - the Blonde, 32 - joined the convoy off Falmouth.

possibly four. Jervis at first refused to proceed on this basis and only ultimately did so after receiving a categorical undertaking from the First Lord of the Admiralty that the difference would be made good. But the promise was never kept and Jervis' own words best show how badly he was let down: 'When the West India expedition came into discussion at the Admiralty in October 1793, Lord Chatham pledged himself to me that Rear-Admiral Gell,[49] with one second-rate and two 74-gun ships should join me at Barbados, and that the Leviathan, after being new copper-sheathed ... should follow. This assurance caused my taking a very strong part with Sir Charles Grey, against the unanimous opinion of all the principal land officers who maintained that our force was inadequate for the reduction of Martinique. I never received a letter from Lord Chatham, or the Secretary of the Admiralty, to inform me that these ships were countermanded ... '[50] Many of the difficulties which arose during the later months of his command stemmed from the numerical weakness of the squadron.

Furthermore, Jervis noticed as regards the composition of the squadron, what little attention had been paid to the conditions likely to be met with during the campaign. The

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49. At that time in command of four ships-of-the-line and a frigate in the Mediterranean and wearing his flag in the St. George, 98. DNB vii, 994.

50. Tucker, J.S.: 'Memoirs of ... the Earl of St. Vincent'; (2 vols.; 1844) - I, 103 - 105 reproduces this passage in a memorandum by Jervis to the Admiralty, which is undated.

lessons of Gardner's failure at Martinique did not seem to have been learned. Only after the greatest difficulty was a bomb-vessel, the Vesuvius, 8, attached to the squadron. Jervis also discovered that none of the transports were big enough nor properly equipped with platforms to carry and disembark field artillery. Against bitter opposition he managed to have two converted, so that their decks were strengthened and stern-ports widened.[51] He was more fortunate on the personnel side, being able to enlist a number of specialists in transport, ordnance and supply. The most valuable was the resourceful Captain John Schank,[52] destined to play an important part in the forthcoming campaign.

Having set sail from England, the expeditionary force arrived piecemeal at Barbados during January 1794, with the loss of only two transports en route.[53] But aboard the troop-ships twelve hundred men were down with scurvy and there was no hospital-ship with the convoy. Before the expedition sailed, Grey and Jervis had agreed upon a joint plan of action. Successive assaults against Martinique, St Lucia and Guadeloupe

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51. ADM 1/316: Jervis to Stephens, November 6, 1793.

52. Schank's mechanical ingenuity earned him the nickname "Old Purchase" in the Navy. Among many achievements was the development of vessels with sliding-keels, notably the survey-ship Lady Nelson. DNB xvii, 897 - 898.

53. See Capt. Thomas Southey: 'Chronological History of the West Indies' (3 vols; Longmans; 1827) vol. iii. Footnotes to pp. 74 - 75 list Jervis' expeditionary force in detail.

should be made without delay, before the enemy had time to retaliate and before the expedition's strength and mobility were reduced by yellow fever and hurricanes. The objectives seemed well within the capability of a force which possessed temporary but overwhelming naval and military superiority in the area.

All at first went according to plan. The campaign opened on February 3rd as the transports with 6,000 troops aboard stood out from Carlisle Bay, Barbados, under the watchful escort of Jervis' squadron.[54] On the 6th three landings were made on Martinique, which the few French warships in the vicinity - one frigate at Fort Royal and one corvette at St Pierre - were powerless to prevent. But the small island garrison put up unexpectedly stiff resistance. The squadron became fully involved in supporting the landings, engaging the enemy batteries and ferrying supplies, while some of the ship's crews were put ashore to drag the artillery up the steep hill-sides. Captain Schank's platforms for disembarking ordnance proved highly successful in operation. The fiercest fighting centred around the enemy shore batteries defending the main harbour of Fort Royal, which proved impregnable to assault by land.[55] Their

54. ADM 1/316: Jervis to Stephens, February 11, 1794.

55. Fort Royal was protected by two fortifications of considerable strength: Fort Bourbon with entrenchments and batteries on high ground at the rear of the town; Fort Louis with shore batteries on the sea front blocking the entrance to the 'carenage' and dockyard.

guns were spiked only after the sloop Zebra had forced her way into the harbour under heavy fire.[56] Martinique finally capitulated on March 22nd, giving Jervis possession of Fort Royal, the finest naval base in the Caribbean.

The operation took much longer than expected and six weeks of the short campaigning season had gone. The next objective, St Lucia, was strategically important because of its fine harbour of Castries. The island was captured at the beginning of April, although once again, the smallness of the enemy garrison did not prevent a bitter struggle for control of its main defences on the heights of La Morne Fortunée. There remained only the large island of Guadeloupe. Repeating the methods successfully used in the earlier operations, 3,000 soldiers were embarked at Fort Royal on April 8th. Against slight enemy resistance, both halves of the island - Grande Terre and Basse Terre - were invested in succession and occupation completed on April 21st.[57]

On that day Jervis wrote triumphantly to the Admiralty: 'I have now the greatest satisfaction in informing you of the entire reduction of the French in these seas ...'.[58] It was

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56. An exploit made famous by the gallantry of her commander, Commander Robert Faulkner. See Edward Fraser: 'Famous Fighters of the Fleet' (Macmillan; 1904), pp. 172 - 194.
57. See Cooper Willyams': 'An account of the campaign ...'
58. ADM 1/316: Jervis to Stephens, April 21, 1794.

indeed a remarkable achievement, due to both commanders' campaigning abilities, the strength of the forces under their command and the enemy's corresponding inability to retaliate. April/May 1794 was unquestionably the high-water mark for British arms in the Leewards Islands during the entire period between the outbreak of war and the Peace of Amiens.

The triumph however was very short-lived, only to be enjoyed for seven weeks. Basic elements of strategy, disregarded in the heat of action, had lain neglected beneath the surface. Now they rose to assert themselves, first to influence and ultimately to dominate the situation. Jervis' squadron was so absorbed in supporting the army in amphibious operations that its other vital functions were not properly carried out. The routine of cruiser patrols was seriously interrupted. It is significant in this connection that the early months of 1794 first witnessed growing activity by enemy privateers. Moreover, while Jervis was compelled to concentrate his squadron in order to support the attack on each French possession, there was every chance of enemy warships entering the area undetected and unchallenged.

The time taken to complete the campaign was an additional undermining factor, which affected the expedition in different ways. As the weeks went by, Jervis became increasingly restive at the squadron's exclusive employment in amphibious operations. Grey found his men exhausted after two months in the tropics and

their numbers dwindling from the ravages of yellow fever. The military commander of Guadeloupe, Lieutenant-General Dundas, was among the many hundreds who succumbed. With hardly any reinforcements being sent from England,[59] the difficulty of retaining possessions the size of Guadeloupe and Martinique was becoming very apparent. Nor was the danger appreciated at home. In April, Grey was instructed to detach two of his battalions to Jamaica, for garrison duty at the newly-won base of Mole St Nicolas on San Domingo.[60]

The available evidence gives no indication whether Grey and Jervis realized how insecure were the foundations upon which their achievement rested. They saw the strength of the military forces being sapped daily and the squadron's limited resources squandered. But they did not believe the enemy was capable of taking advantage of these weaknesses. Otherwise, there is

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59. Only 2,800 men were despatched to the station, in the twelve months, November 1793 - 1794:- 'Facts relative to the conduct of the war in the West Indies ...' (London; J. Owen; 1796). Appendix 4: Return of men despatched from Europe and America to the West Indies between January 1793 & April 1796: (extract)

1794.	March	2,377
	April 1 and 28	320
	October	100

In December 2,219 troops were detached from the garrison at Gibraltar.

60. WO 6/7: Dundas-Grey correspondence, April 12 - May 6, 1794.

no satisfactory explanation for the complacency which marked both commanders' ensuing conduct.

At the end of May 1794, Grey and Jervis began a leisurely tour of the station on board Jervis' flagship, the Boyne, 98, with the Vengeance, 74, and Nautilus, 16, in company.[61] Instructions were left with the second-in-command, Rear-Admiral Charles Thompson, for safeguarding the station with the rest of the fleet during their absence.[62] These were unsatisfactory in several ways. The hurricane season was approaching and Thompson was rightly ordered to keep the main units at safe anchorage in Trois Islets, Martinique. But no less than thirteen out of the squadron's remaining twenty-three smaller warships were allowed to proceed beyond the boundaries of the station on various duties. A contemporary map of the squadron's dispositions on June 4th clearly shows the unfortunate results.[63] In particular, Guadeloupe in the centre and St Vincent, Grenada and Tobago to the south, were entirely devoid of naval protection.

That day - June 4th - Grey and Jervis had reached St Kitts on their tour, and the two ships-of-the-line lay quietly at anchor in Basseterre roads. The tranquility was shattered by

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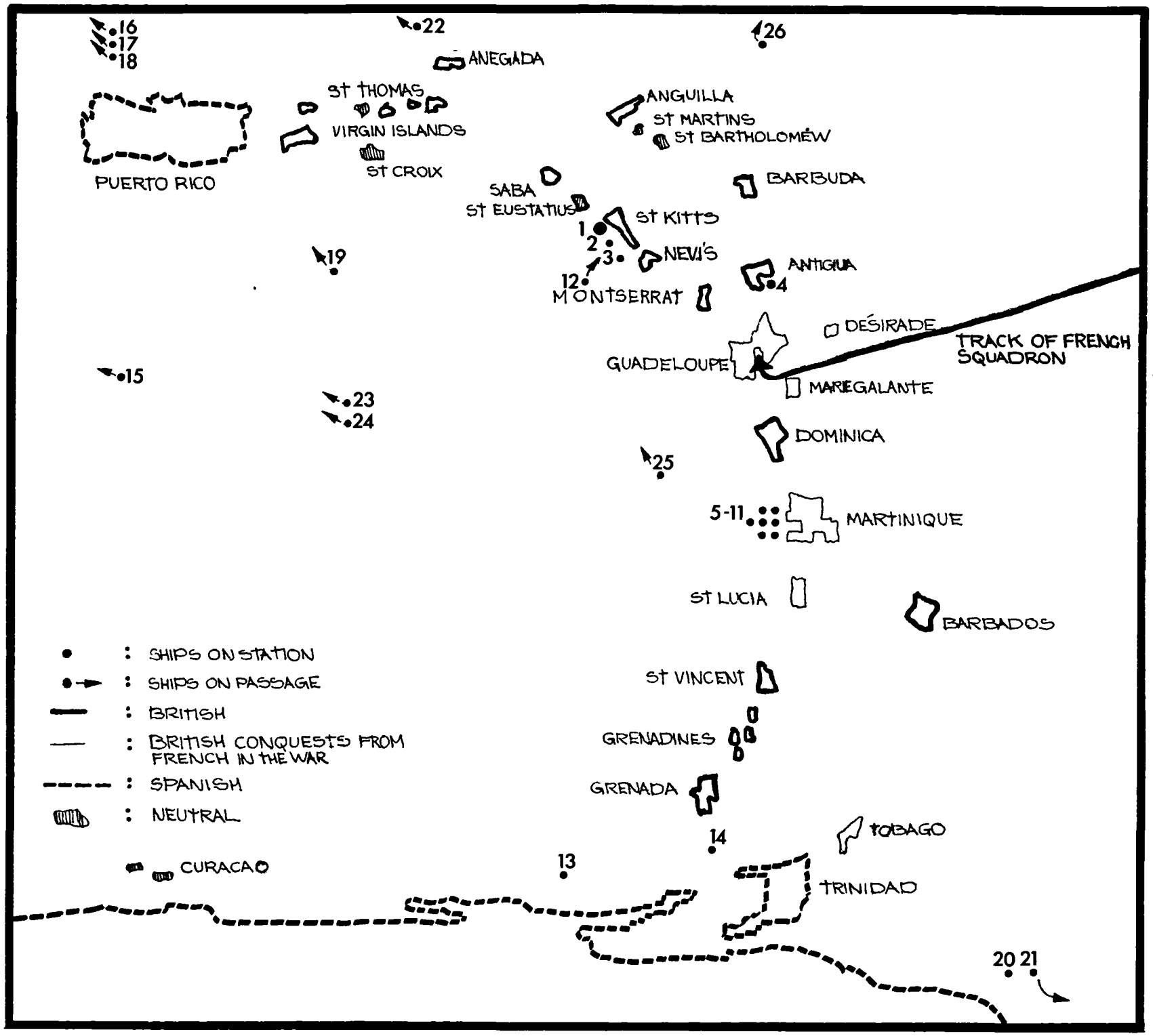
61. ADM 1/316: Jervis to Stephens, May 25, 1794.

62. Nat. Mar. Mus.: Thompson Papers (THO/4): Original letters and orders received (November 1793 - December 1794) - Jervis to Thompson, May 26, 1794.

63. See map 1, overleaf, which is based on the table of squadron dispositions, attached to Jervis' report to the Admiralty: ADM 1/316: Jervis to Stephens, June 4, 1794.



1-3 JERVIS=WITH BOYNE 98 ●, VENGEANCE, 74 AND NAUTILUS, 16 AT ST KITTS

4 FRIGATE WINCHESTER, 32, CAREENING AT ENGLISH HARBOUR

5-11 MAIN SQUADRON AT ANCHOR, FORT ROYAL, MARTINIQUE = VANGUARD, 74 [RIA THOMPSON] HECTOR, 74, VETERAN, 64, ASSURANCE, 44, SOLEBAY, 32, INSPECTOR, 16, BULLDOG, 14

12 SLOOP RESOURCE, 24 ARRIVING AT ST KITTS FROM MARTINIQUE, WITH NEWS OF THE FRENCH ARRIVAL OFF GUADELOUPE

13 14 FRIGATES ALARM, 32 AND QUEBEC 32 CRUISING OFF SPINISH COAST

15 FRIGATE ROSE, 28 CONVOYING TROOPS TO JAMAICA

16-18 BEAULIEU, 40, BLANCHE 32 AND ZEBRA 16, ON PASSAGE TO NORTH AMERICAN STATION

19 FRIGATE TERPSICHORE, 32 ENROUTE TO AMERICA WITH CAPTURD FRENCH GENERAL COLLOT [FLAG OF TRUCE DUTY]

20-21 SCHOONER BERBICE AND BOMB-VESSEL VESUVIUS CRUISING OFF CAYENNE

22 FRIGATE CERES, 32, CARRYING ARMS TO THE GOVERNOR OF BERMUDA

23-24 WOOLWICH, 44 AND EXPERIMENT 44, EN ROUTE TO JAMAICA WITH TROOPS

25 SLOOP REPRISAL, 16 ORDERD TO ST KITTS TO COLLECT THE TRADE

26 SLOOP AVENGER, 16 DESPATCHED TO LAT 24° 50'N TO ESCORT CARTELS WITH ORDERS TO RETURN LATER TO ANTIGUA [FLAG OF TRUCE DUTY]

MAP 1. Dispositions of Leewards Squadron. June 4, 1794

the arrival of the sloop Resource hastily despatched by Thompson from Martinique. It brought news that on June 3rd a French squadron with transports in company had suddenly appeared off the coast of Guadeloupe. Fifteen hundred troops had disembarked and finding no opposition, captured two important positions on the island.[64] They had been carried in three transports and two large ships "en flûte", under the weak escort of two frigates, Thetis and Pique, and one corvette, which had together sailed from Rochefort on April 23rd. The event showed what risks France was prepared to take in order to regain Guadeloupe; the enemy force would certainly have been destroyed had it been intercepted.

Jervis reacted vigorously to the news; sailing immediately with the Boyne and Vengeance from St Kitts, and 'pushing with press of sail' for Basseterre, Guadeloupe, where he ordered Thompson to join him with the main squadron from Martinique. But it was already too late. On arrival off Pointe à Pitre, the combined squadron discovered the enemy safely at anchor in the inner harbour, sheltered beneath the guns of the Fleur d'Epée batteries.[65]

The enemy's descent upon Guadeloupe had the most serious

64.(WO 6/7: Grey to Dundas, (4 despatches), June 11 - 14, 1794. (ADM 1/316: Jervis to Stephens, June 13, 1794.

65. ADM 1/316: Jervis to Stephens, June 13, 1794.

consequences. On board the frigate Thetis was the mulatto Victor Hugues, appointed commander of the expedition. In the months ahead it was his ruthlessness and fanatical zeal for the Republican cause which reversed many of the gains which the British forces had made in the theatre. The strategic results were equally serious. The enemy force had achieved complete surprise. Although its weakness in fire-power prevented any challenge to the station's naval superiority, the fact that Guadeloupe had been invaded so easily demonstrated the ineffectiveness of the cruiser patrol screen. Clearly, unless the station's number of frigates and sloops was greatly increased, the enemy could repeat the procedure with impunity. Moreover, Victor Hugues' presence in force on Guadeloupe was as dangerous a threat to the islands recently captured as to those which had long been in British possession.

For the next six months Jervis and Grey tried without success to dislodge the French from their hold upon Guadeloupe. The initiative had passed to Victor Hugues, whose republican propaganda found a ready response amongst a negro population, eager for independence and ready to serve as auxiliaries. As Hugues' military power rose, the fortunes of the British expeditionery force declined. Yellow fever and dysentery ravaged the isolated garrisons, until by the end of July only 4,500 men out of the original force of 7,000 remained fit for

duty.[66] In the squadron, the strain of continuous service was beginning to tell and many of the ships were long overdue for refits, which could not be carried out by the local yards. No reinforcements, naval or military, arrived from England during this period and Grey wrote home, complaining bitterly: '... you seem to have totally forgotten us'.[67]

At the beginning of July 1794, the Grande Terre half of the island had to be evacuated and Grey set up a fortified camp at Berville, on the narrow isthmus connecting it with Basse Terre. But the ground was marshy and myriads of mosquitoes brought heavy casualties to the fever-ridden garrison. The shallowness of the coastal waters made supply by sea a hazardous undertaking for the Navy. By September the camp had been cut off from the sea. Although Jervis continued to ferry in supplies by small craft, the enemy retorted by placing a chain of gunboats across the shallow bay.[68] On October 6th the Berville camp was overrun and ten days later the whole island was in French hands, with the exception of an isolated and strategically unimportant garrison at Fort Matilda, which held out until December.[69]

The loss of Guadeloupe proved a turning-point in the war in the West Indies. As the enemy's last remaining possession

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66. Fortescue ... History of the British Army, vol. IV (part i) p. 385.

67. WO 6/7: War Office Papers. Grey to Nepean (2 letters), July 18 and 19, 1794.

68. ADM 1/316: Jervis to Stephens, September 26 and October 2, 1794.

69. WO 6/7: Grey to Dundas, October 16 and 24, 1794.

in the Leeward Islands, it soon became the focus of French resistance and remained in their hands until 1810. It was from Guadeloupe that Hugues launched his attempts to gain control of neighbouring British colonies in 1795 and 1796.[70] Even more important, the island was for many years the main base of the enemy's privateers.[71] In terms of command of the sea, the significance was also far-reaching. Events in the Caribbean during previous wars had shown that islands changed hands with great frequency and it might be argued that such losses were inevitable. But here there was a difference. The harsh truth had to be faced in 1794 that, in spite of British naval supremacy in the area an inferior enemy force had succeeded in reaching Guadeloupe undetected, landed and taken complete possession. Unlike earlier wars, France did not need to send a fleet to ensure success; because the seas were wide, the islands numerous and the patrolling cruisers too few, the door was wide open to all who came.

Before the evacuation of Guadeloupe, both Jervis and Grey had given up their commands and returned to England. Jervis did so partly on health grounds but both had become involved in a bitter quarrel over the requisition of property at the time of the occupation of Martinique. Their successors, Vice-Admiral

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70. Q.v. post, pp. 44-5.

71. See chapter 6, pp. 248-9.

Sir Benjamin Caldwell[72] and Lieutenant-General Sir John Vaughan were of lesser calibre. Caldwell was a morose and taciturn officer, who ever since the action of the Glorious First of June 1794 had nursed a grievance at being omitted from the official despatches. Vaughan still carried the stigma of having been implicated with Rodney in the confiscation of property during the capture of St Eustatius in 1782. Neither of the two new commanders proved capable of restoring the serious situation which greeted their arrival at Barbados in November 1794

Although Caldwell brought from England a powerful squadron of nine ships-of-the-line, four more than Jervis had returned with, the fire-power of their broadsides was not the answer to the situation. Only frigates and sloops in large numbers could protect the trade and check the increasing depredations of enemy privateers. But Caldwell found almost all the smaller warships left on the station to be in a desperate condition.[73] Most needed major refits beyond the capacity of the Antigua yard and, through disease and desertion amongst their crews, were grossly undermanned. Vaughan, too, was dismayed to find there remained only two thousand fit troops under his command, just at the moment when Victor Hugues was preparing to take the offensive.

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72. Biographical details in: DNB III, 700; Ralfe I, 384 - 6; Naval Chronicle XI, 1.

73. Nat. Mar. Mus.: Caldwell Papers (Cal/108): Caldwell's Journal, November 26, 1794.

Except for a small detachment from Gibraltar,[74] no military reinforcements were forthcoming and the Government continued to ban the raising of negro regiments.

Caldwell tried to overcome his difficulties in two ways. He fully appreciated the vital importance of Guadeloupe, as the main enemy privateer base and the hub, from which the spokes of Hugues' attacks upon the neighbouring islands would radiate. Since lack of troops prevented its military reoccupation, blockade by sea was the only alternative. If successful, the privateers would be hemmed in, the supplies to the island stopped and the enemy offensive stillborn. In January 1795, therefore, Caldwell and Vaughan issued a joint proclamation, which placed Guadeloupe and the surrounding French-held islands of Deseada and Marie Galante under close blockade.[75] Neutral vessels were prohibited access to the area on pain of seizure and cruiser patrols were sent out to girdle the three islands.

Secondly, Caldwell endeavoured to improve the disposition of the squadron, to prevent the enemy penetrating the cruiser screen with the same ease as in June 1794. Unlike Jervis, he opposed scattering his forces in every quarter of the station, but preferred concentration around the centre of the island chain.

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74. 2,219 troops raised from the garrison. See: 'Facts relative to the conduct of the war in the West Indies ...' (London; J. Owen; 1796) appendix 4: 'Return of men from Europe and America to the West Indies ...'.

75. Nat. Mar. Mus.: Caldwell Papers (Cal/108): Caldwell's Journal, January 29, 1795.

To some extent, the fact that more ships of the line were available to him added weight to this plan. A map, based on the dispositions of the squadron on January 5th 1795, clearly shows Caldwell's intentions.[76] Concentration, however, was not the answer. It might have been, had Caldwell become engaged in a main fleet action; but in fact he faced an elusive opponent able to inflict a thousand pinpricks, by means of widely-scattered privateer attacks. The chronic shortage of frigates and sloops on the station was the real stumbling-block.

Thus neither of Caldwell's solutions succeeded in practice. Effective blockade proved beyond the capacity of a squadron in poor condition and without enough ships. Caldwell was soon pointing out plaintively to the Admiralty that at least six warships on permanent patrol were needed for Guadeloupe alone.[77] With little hope of reinforcements from England, he turned in desperation for some contribution from the British colonies. The island legislatures were each asked to fit out at the public expense: 'a copper-bottomed vessel from sixty to one hundred and twenty tons, arm'd with ten or twelve guns and carrying thirty

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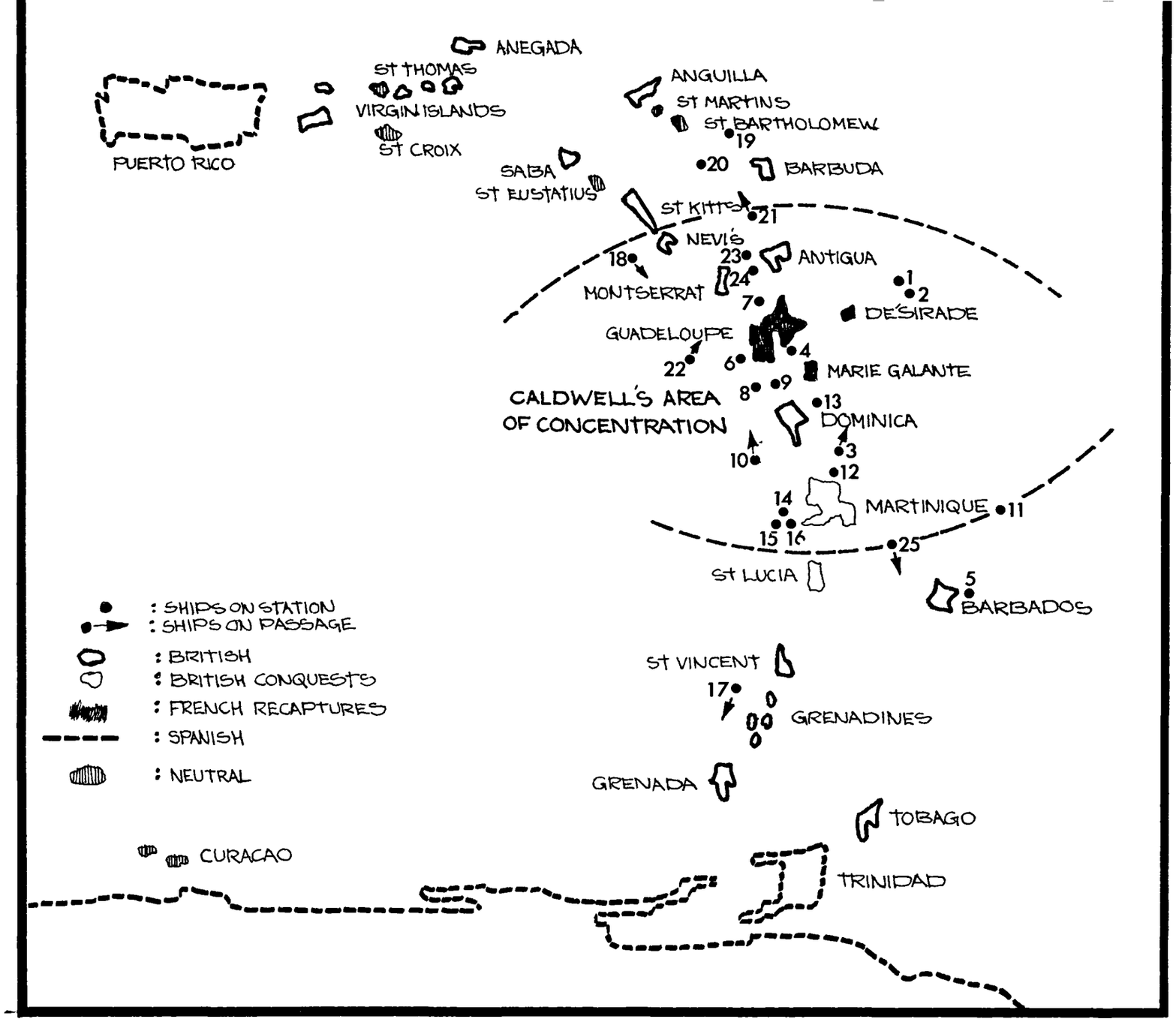
76. ADM 1/317: Caldwell to Stephens, January 5th, 1795, enclosing a disposition plan with the report. See map 2. Compare with Jervis' dispositions six months before (map 1), when almost the same number of warships were available. Caldwell's preference for concentration is very apparent.

77. ADM 1/317: Caldwell to Stephens, January 3rd, 1795.



MAP 2. Dispositions of Leewards Squadron. January 5, 1795.

1-2 BELLONA, 74 (CAPT WILSON), & ALARM – CRUISING TO WINDWARD OF DESCADA

3 ADAMANT, 50 = ON PASSAGE FROM MARTINIQUE TO REINFORCE ABOVE

4 BLANCHE, 32 = OFF POINTE À PITRE

5 BEAULIEU, 40 = AT BARBADOS BEING SHORT OFF WATER, SHE HAD LEFT THE GUADELOUPE BLOCKADE ON DECEMBER 18, WITH OUT ORDERS

6 VETERAN, 64 = CRUSING OFF VIEUX FORT, BASSETERRE

7 QUEBEC, 32 = CRUISING BETWEEN ENGLISHMAN'S HEAD AND NORTH CAPE, GUADELOUPE

8-9 GANGES, 74 = RESOURCE, 24 CRUISING OF THE SAINTES, THE LATTER WITH DAMAGED MASTS

10 ASSURANCE, 44 = TRANSPORTING TROOPS TO THE SAINTES AND ANTIGUA

11 RAMILLIES, 74 = ON TRADE PROTECTION CRUISING TO WINDWARD OF MARTINIQUE & ST LUCIA

12 SLOOP BULLDOG, 14, = CRUISING OFF TRINITÉ MARTINIQUE

13 THESEUS, 74 = PROTECTING DOMINICA

14-16 MATESTIC, 74 (CALDWELL'S FLAG SHIP) MONTAGUE, 74 AND VANGUARD, 74 = AT FORT ROYAL MARTINIQUE

17 ROEBUCK, 44 = ON PASSAGE TO GRENADA WITH TROOPS

18 EXPERIMENT, 44 = ON RETURN PASSAGE FROM ST KITTS, HAVING DELIVERED ARMS

19 WOOLWICH, 44 & SOLEBAY, 32,

20 CRUISING OFF ST BARTHOLOMEW ON WATCH FOR PRIVATEERS

21 INSPECTOR, 16 -- EN ROUTE TO ST BARTHOLOMEW

22 ZEBRA, 16 | CARRYING DESPATCHES TO THE GOVERNOR OF ANTIGUA

23 TERPSICHORE, 32 : NAUTILUS, 16

24 REFITTING AT ENGLISH HARBOUR

25 SCHOONER BERBICE, 8 –

to forty men',[78] for auxiliary service with the Guadeloupe cruiser patrol. But the request opened up fresh problems. The colonial assemblies would only subscribe to the protection of their own islands and did not understand the strategic importance of blockading Guadeloupe. Moreover, they jibbed at the expense and disliked the prospect of parting with vessels which might never return. Only the islands of Antigua and Barbados made any contribution at all, and the few brigs and schooners they supplied were too small and lightly-armed to be of much use.[79] Perhaps Caldwell should have tried to have them converted in the yards at English Harbour and Fort Royal, but he was aware of the Navy Board's reluctance to meet the costs involved.

All the station commander's efforts failed to prevent the French reinforcing Guadeloupe in January 1795 and repeating their success of six months before. The thrust was delivered by a convoy of ten transports, carrying 3,500 troops and escorted by five warships,[80] which had sailed from Brest on November 17, 1794. Its safe arrival was vital to Hugues' cause, especially

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78. Nat. Mar. Mus. Caldwell Papers (Cal/111); Caldwell's letter-book, January 3rd, 1795.

79. Ibid, March 19th, 1795.

80. Comprising L'Hercule, an old 74, cut down (rasé) to 46 guns; the frigate L'Astrée, 36; and three 20-gun sloops, Le Leveret, La Prompte and Le Duras. The escorts' fire-power and manoeuvrability was affected by their being crowded with soldiers and stores. Le Duras, for instance, carried 400 troops in addition to her own crew.

for his planned offensive against the British Windward Islands. That it should be undetected was also essential, since the weakness of the escort made the convoy vulnerable against even a small part of Caldwell's squadron. But it was, in fact, intercepted. Cruising to windward of Deseada, Captain George Wilson, with Bellona, 74, and Alarm, 32, sighted the convoy on January 5th and remained in contact for eighteen hours. Caldwell was at anchor with the main fleet in St Pierre, Martinique and no other vessels were close enough to Deseada to intervene in time.[81] Nevertheless, Captain Wilson with his ship-of-the-line could have seriously damaged the enemy if he had acted energetically. But he went into action only after hours of hesitation. The sloop Le Duras was taken with 400 troops aboard, but the whole of the rest of the convoy with its vital cargo, got safely into Pointe à Pitre on January 6th.[82]

The second penetration of the Guadeloupe blockade had serious repercussions on the Leewards station during the next eighteen months. Caldwell and Vaughan quickly found evidence of an enemy offensive in preparation, with troops and vessels

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81. See Map 2, page 41.

82. Nat. Mar. Mus. Caldwell Papers (Cal/111): Caldwell's letter-book - Caldwell to Rear-Admiral Thompson, January 7, 1795.
ADM 1/317: Caldwell to Stephens, January 15, 1795, enclosing Captain Wilson's report, dated January 14.

massing at Pointe à Pitre.[83] The blockade of the harbour was tightened, but when Hugues started to use the islands' many creeks and estuaries for his operations, often under the cover of night, there was no adequate reply. 'Copper'd small craft frequently find the means of escaping from the numerous ports in that island and land ammunition, men and provisions, which the ships I am able to afford to cruize round those islands are not in number sufficient to prevent.'[84] Even when the enemy were sighted, their small vessels were so fast that Caldwell's frigates were only able to catch them when the winds were strong and favourable. It was by these methods that Hugues forged a link between his base at Guadeloupe and the islands he intended to conquer.

In March 1795 the storm broke. French forces landed on Grenada and St Vincent to coincide with negro and Carib uprisings there. The Governor of Grenada was taken prisoner and the Carib revolt on St Vincent led to a notorious massacre of English prisoners on Dorsetshire Hill. Great economic damage was inflicted on the Windward Islands; many of the sugar plantations were destroyed, the canes burnt on St Vincent alone being equivalent to nearly two-thirds of the annual crop. Victor Hugues found ready support from many of the local

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83. Nat. Mar. Mus. Caldwell Papers (Cal/108): Caldwell's Journal, February 25 - 26, 1795.

84. ADM 1/317: Caldwell to Nepean, April 16, 1795.

inhabitants and the British islands only held out, with the small military garrisons almost besieged in the capitals.[85] Severe criticism was levelled at Caldwell, but it was entirely as a result of the utmost exertions by his squadron that the French raids were not translated into permanent occupation.[86]

As the weakness of the British defences became apparent, the enemy grew bolder. Further landings were made on Dominica and St Lucia, immediately to the north and south of Martinique, where the main British naval and military forces were based. These attacks were repulsed, only to be followed in April by others against the Leeward Islands themselves. An amphibious landing was made on St Christopher with the support of French sloops, but driven back due to the loyalty of the local inhabitants.[87] Caldwell then learned of an enemy plan to seize the Dutch island of St Eustatius, which in their hands would have placed St Christopher, Nevis and Antigua in great danger.[88] Fortunately the attack was abandoned after the signature of a peace treaty between France and Holland in May 1795.

Against this minor gain, the treaty added further problems to an already critical situation. With Holland now an enemy, there was every prospect that detachments from her considerable

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85. WO 6/7: Vaughan to Dundas, March 23rd, 1795.

86. ADM 1/317: Caldwell to Nepean, March 15, 1795.

87. Ibid... April 16, 1795.

88. Ibid... April 11, 1795.

fleet, then entirely in home waters, would be sent to defend her Caribbean possessions. Moreover the French privateers were bound to gain by free access to the harbours of formerly neutral islands. More immediately, the treaty raised the question of the future of the Dutch possessions - the islands of St Eustatius, Bonaire, Curaçao and the large colony of Surinam on the South American mainland. The British Government's first reaction was to consider an early seizure of the latter, as a means of extending Guiana colony and threatening the French at Cayenne. How possibly could Caldwell and Vaughan, however, with their entire forces thrown into a desperate defence of the islands, be expected to undertake such an operation? Both commanders rightly opposed it.[89] There could hardly be clearer evidence of the wide gulf which separated strategic theorizing in London and the actual situation in the command.

As early as March 1795, the Admiralty had decided to recall Caldwell, during whose brief period of command the Leewards station had suffered a series of disasters. Although not personally responsible for them, he was like Gardner before him, made the scapegoat of the Government's strategic mistakes. Caldwell's efforts, too, looked very ineffectual against the brilliance of Jervis' achievements earlier. By reappointing Admiral Sir John Laforey to command of the station in April 1795,

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89. ADM 1/317; Caldwell to Nepean, May 17, 1795.

it may be the Admiralty believed his previous experience might help retrieve the situation. They were soon to be disillusioned. The situation had altered too dramatically.since 1793 to allow such influence to have any effect.

Arriving at the Leeward Islands in June, Laforey found the enemy offensive in full flood. Only six days after he took over the command, St Lucia was evacuated and shortly afterwards a revolt broke out on Dominica. Moreover, although the squadron now possessed eight ships-of-the-line compared with one small 50-gunner in 1793, command of the seas had been lost. Laforey was at once given personal proof of this, when the frigate which brought him to Barbados was chased for fifteen hours by three enemy cruisers operating from Guadeloupe.[90] In his first report to the Admiralty he spoke of the poor condition in which he found the fleet and: '... the great lack of small ships and seamen which makes it impossible to prevent the enemy supplying Guadeloupe'.[91] Almost all the British islands in the command were in serious danger and exposed to a joint foe, 'hoisting French and Dutch flags together'. In the Leeward Islands to the north, the French were not only using Dutch St Eustatius as a stepping-stone to further aggression, but

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90. L'Hercule, rasé 46; L'Astrée, 32; La Concorde, 32. The two first came out with the enemy convoy to Guadeloupe in January 1795. The latter had been in the West Indies since the outbreak of war.

91. ADM 1/317: Laforey to Nepean, June 23, 1795.

their influence was spreading to the neutral islands in those waters. Both Swedish St Bartholomew and Danish St Thomas in the Virgin Islands, were being used as fitting-out bases for small ships and as refuges for the French privateers and their prizes. It was known that an enemy prison-ship rode at anchor in St Thomas harbour, with British captives aboard awaiting shipment to Guadeloupe.[92]

The strain of the situation soon led to a breach between Laforey and his second-in-command, Rear Admiral Charles Thompson, just at the time when solidarity in the squadron was essential. Thompson was a veteran of Caribbean service. A post-captain under Hood and Rodney in the actions at St Kitts and the Saintes, he had subsequently been deputy to four station admirals in turn. An able and experienced but truculent officer, he openly resented Laforey's reappointment to the post he might have expected to fill on Caldwell's departure.[93]

Two days after assuming command, Laforey ordered his deputy to break away from escorting a homeward-bound convoy to England and proceed immediately to St Christopher, where the Governor feared an imminent French attack from St Eustatius. Thompson obeyed with reluctance and spent only a short time at St Christopher before taking his ships on to Antigua. There

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92. ADM 1/317: Laforey to Nepean, June 23, 1795.

93. Biographical details in D.N.B. xix, 689; Ralfe ii, 1.

he received a second urgent message from his admiral; this time ordering him to return to Martinique. News had come in that an enemy squadron had sailed from Brest on May 25th, bound for Guadeloupe, and Laforey determined to concentrate his fleet for its reception. But the enemy did not appear and instead the Governor of St Christopher complained bitterly at the lack of naval protection, mentioning in particular Thompson's desertion to Antigua. When Laforey asked for an explanation, Thompson replied with a vehement condemnation of Laforey's entire strategy. An acrimonious correspondence followed,[94] which ended with Laforey ordering Thompson's return to England and court-martial on charges of disobedience and insubordination. Proceedings were begun but terminated over a year later, after Laforey's sudden death on return passage to England in June 1796.[95]

The dispute has been described at some length because it reveals a sharp collision of views regarding command strategy. Thompson advocated the maximum dispersal of the squadron to give the best possible protection to the colonies and their trade against enemy privateers and small warships. Laforey, on the other hand, preferred concentration as a safeguard against the arrival of a major enemy force from France. Both were sound solutions to the problems concerned, but the squadron was too

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94. Nat. Mar. Mus. Thompson Papers (Tho/8): Orders and Letters received (March 1795 - December 1796) fully describe the details of the quarrel.

95. Nat. Mar. Mus. Thompson Papers (Tho/8): Orders and Instructions ... (q.v. ante).

weak and the seas too wide to allow them to be undertaken simultaneously. This was the crux of the matter. Laforey's main reason for adopting a strategy of concentration was the knowledge that the arrival of an enemy squadron would best be met by keeping his ships-of-the-line together, with which class of warship the station was now comparatively well-equipped.[96] As a result, the major ships of the squadron lay for weeks at anchor in Fort Royal and St Pierre, Martinique, awaiting an opportunity to revenge the disasters of June 1794 and January 1795.

They waited in vain however. Unfortunately for Laforey, the enemy continued to rely on widespread privateering and scattered raids by small warships as its main weapon. As merchant ship losses through privateer action rose steeply during the later months of 1795, a local outcry arose against Laforey. Planters, merchants and shipmasters asked themselves what was the use of Laforey's ships-of-the-line lying inactive in harbour, while the enemy privateers did as they wished at sea.

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96. The Admiralty List Books (ADM/8), ff 68 - 76, in the Public Record Office give annual figures of ship-of-the-line strength on the Leewards station during the period. There was a sharp rise in the total during 1795.

Ships-of-the-line (50 guns and above)	1790	1791	1792	1793	1794	1795	1796	1797	1798
	1	1	1	2	5	9	10	10	12

The fact that such warships were ill-suited for cruising did not alter their resentment.

Laforey was indeed in a very awkward position. He bombarded the Admiralty for more frigates and sloops, but few were sent. Like Caldwell, he tried to obtain brigs and schooners locally; but as before, the colonies were uncooperative and the few which were provided proved unsatisfactory in service. They were invariably unarmed and Laforey could find no cannon in the royal arsenal small enough to go inside them. Purchase and conversion costs were high and paid by the Admiralty only with reluctance. In August 1795, for instance, nearly £5,000 was spent in converting two small sloops at the English Harbour yard.[97]

From the autumn of 1795 until the following spring, events on the station were overshadowed by preparations in England to send a second major expeditionary force to the Leeward Islands. As the product entirely of decisions made by the Cabinet and Admiralty in England, the story of the ill-fated expedition before it reached the Caribbean - the crisis over the naval commander, the exasperating delays in departure - is recounted elsewhere.[98] Long before it arrived at Barbados, however, repercussions were felt on the station.

In December 1795, Laforey was informed by the Admiralty of

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97. ADM 1/317: Laforey to Nepean, August 6, 1795.

98. See chapter 6: 'Admiralty & Cabinet: 1788 - 1794,' pp. 316 et seq.

his recall and the impending arrival of the expeditionary force under the joint command of Rear-Admiral Christian and General Abercromby.[99] It had been decided in London that the principal objective should be the recapture of St Lucia, with the occupation of the Dutch colony of Surinam as the secondary aim. But of this Laforey was told nothing and for five months he waited on the station, while the expedition was three times driven back by gales in the Channel.[100] At last, on March 17th 1796, a frigate put in at Carlisle Bay, Barbados with the expedition's military commander on board. Angry and impatient at the endless delays, Abercromby had arrived ahead of the main expedition, to begin the campaign in conjunction with Laforey and the local forces.[101]

Two things struck Abercromby at once: Laforey's experience and willingness to help, and the extent to which the campaign's success depended upon co-operation with the station admiral and the ships under his command. He did not hesitate therefore to tell Laforey the expedition's strategic objectives and together they worked out a joint plan of action. With Laforey's squadron, 5,000 troops available in Barbados and a further 1,800 scattered amongst the other islands, they agreed that two amphibious operations could be undertaken without delay. The

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99. ADM 2/ 129 : Orders & Instructions: Nepean to Laforey.

100. Ibid. (98) pp. 316 et seq.

101. WO 7/8: Dundas to Abercromby, February 3, 1796, permitting Abercromby to set off ahead.

first was a descent on the Guiana coast, where the settlements of Berbice, Demerara and Essequibo had asked for British protection in April. Commodore Parr, with the Malabar, 54, three frigates and an armed transport carrying 1,200 men, was thereupon despatched from Barbados by Laforey. The Guiana operation ended successfully on May 2nd, after a ten day campaign.[102] The second and principal objective decided upon by Abercromby and Laforey was the recapture of St Lucia. With the necessary troops embarked and the squadron's ships-of-the-line in attendance as escort, the expeditionary convoy weighed from Carlisle Bay on April 21st, 1796.

On that very day, Admiral Christian appeared in the roadstead with the leading ships of the main expedition, having at last got away from Spithead at the fourth attempt on March 20th. To his utter astonishment, the departing convoy ignored his arrival and during the afternoon proceeded past him out to sea en route for St Lucia. Unaware of its purpose or destination, Christian, who had arrived to take over command of the station, vented his feelings upon the Admiralty: '... the Admiral Sir John Laforey being in the act of getting under weigh with the several divisions of troops, the particulars and objects

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102. Capt. Thomas Southey: 'Chronological History of the West Indies', vol. III, pp. 117 - 119.
Steel's Naval Chronologist, p. Lxxxiv.
ADM 1/318: Laforey to Nepean, April 22 & May 2, 1796;
Parr to Laforey, May 2, 1796.

of which I presume will be explained to me ...'.[103] The complaint reveals the confusion into which the command of the station had fallen. Obviously unable to await a reply from the Admiralty, which might take six weeks to arrive, Christian transferred to a frigate and ignominiously set off in pursuit of the departing convoy. Having caught up with it at Martinique, he obtained a reluctant transfer of command from Laforey just before the campaign opened.[104]

St. Lucia was recaptured on May 25th after a month's bitter fighting in which casualties were heavy on both sides. It was followed by the re-establishment of control over Grenada and St Vincent, the centres of the Carib revolt. The French could do nothing to impede the expedition's progress, as their naval power in the area had dwindled to a few frigates and sloops stationed at Guadeloupe. In fact their ability to despatch raiding squadrons or convoys of reinforcement from France had practically ended as a result of commitments in Europe and the Mediterranean. Nevertheless, rumours to the contrary persisted. The recall of Rear-Admiral Lessequel, the French naval commander-in-chief at Guadeloupe, in May 1796, was thought at first to herald the arrival of a powerful enemy squadron led by five

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103. ADM 1/318: Christian to Nepean, April 21, 1796.

104. ADM 1/318: Christian to Nepean, April 22 and 24, 1796.

ships-of-the-line.[105] It turned out however that this force was bound for San Domingo.

In fact the main movement of enemy warships on the station at this time came from the Dutch. At the end of April, a squadron under Admiral Braak suddenly appeared off Cayenne and Surinam; there was momentary anxiety for the safety of the Guiana settlements which had been occupied earlier in the month.[106] But the fears proved groundless. Braak's crews arrived sickly and scurvy-ridden and the ships were in a bad state. For months the squadron lay at anchor in Surinam, taking no part in enemy operations. Yet its presence - the familiar "fleet in being" concept of naval strategy - forced Christian to strengthen the cruiser patrols off the South Americ coast.[107]

This precaution was Christian's last duty as station commander. As early as May 1796, the Admiralty had decided to replace him, only two months after his delayed departure from England. It is difficult to justify the frequency with which the Admiralty replaced commanders on the Leewards station. No

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105. This information came to Christian in an anonymous letter, dated May 8th, 1796, sent by an agent residing in Basseterre, Guadeloupe.

106. q.v. ante, p. 53.

107. ADM 1/318: Commodore Parr (senior officer off the Guiana coast) to Christian, May 12, 1796. The Dutch squadron consisted of one 54, two 36-gun frigates and two sloops.

doubt the old practice of a three-year appointment had to be modified in time of war. But since the end of Laforey's first tour in May 1793, no less than six changes had been made.[108] The command's stability inevitably suffered. Moreover, the station's routine administration was further disorganized by the arrival of two major expeditionary forces from England during the same period.

However, the next station admiral, Rear-Admiral Sir Henry Harvey,[109] took over in June 1796 and remained in command the full three years. It was an indication not only of his ability but of a slacking of the tension and pressure of major events on the station. Indeed by the end of 1796, the French effort in the Lesser Antilles was nearly exhausted. Only a few frigates and sloops still operated from their sole remaining possession, Guadeloupe. Victor Hugues had returned to France and the revolt he had instigated was crushed. At one stage Harvey had twelve ships-of-the-line under him - far more than had been available to his predecessors[110] - but some of these gradually transferred elsewhere as the station's needs became simplified. The obligation to support the army in amphibious operations no longer existed, so that more warships were available for the protection

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108. See Appendix 1 (a): Naval commanders-in-chief - Leeward Islands.

109. Biographical details in D.N.B. ix, 88 - 89; Ralfe ii, 98 - 112.

110. Compare details in ADM/8: Admiralty list Books, ff. 68 - 76 See footnote (96).

of the islands and their trade. On the other hand privateering on a large scale remained the enemy's principal weapon of offence, and its control was Harvey's main concern. Although still insufficient, the number of smaller warships in the squadron had increased steadily. A study of the dispositions of Harvey's ships on July 1st, 1796 shows clearly how much easier and more effective protection of the station had become.[111]

Yet Harvey was faced by developments, unknown to his predecessors, which resulted in the focus of squadron activity being transferred from Guadeloupe and the northern reaches of the station, down to the Windward Islands, Trinidad and the Guiana coast. The cause of this strategic change was Spain.

Step by step during 1796 Spain had drawn closer to France. By a clause in the Treaty of Madrid signed on August 19th, each power agreed to form a combined fleet of fifteen ships-of-the-line and ten frigates in readiness for joint action. Although Spain was still neutral at this time, the decision had immediate repercussions in the West Indies. In July the Admiralty learned that a French squadron of seven ships-of-the-line and three frigates under Admiral Richery was preparing to sail from Cadiz, with Guadeloupe or San Domingo as its most likely destination. Also at anchor in the harbour lay a Spanish squadron of eight ships-of-the-line commanded by Vice-Admiral Solano.[112] It

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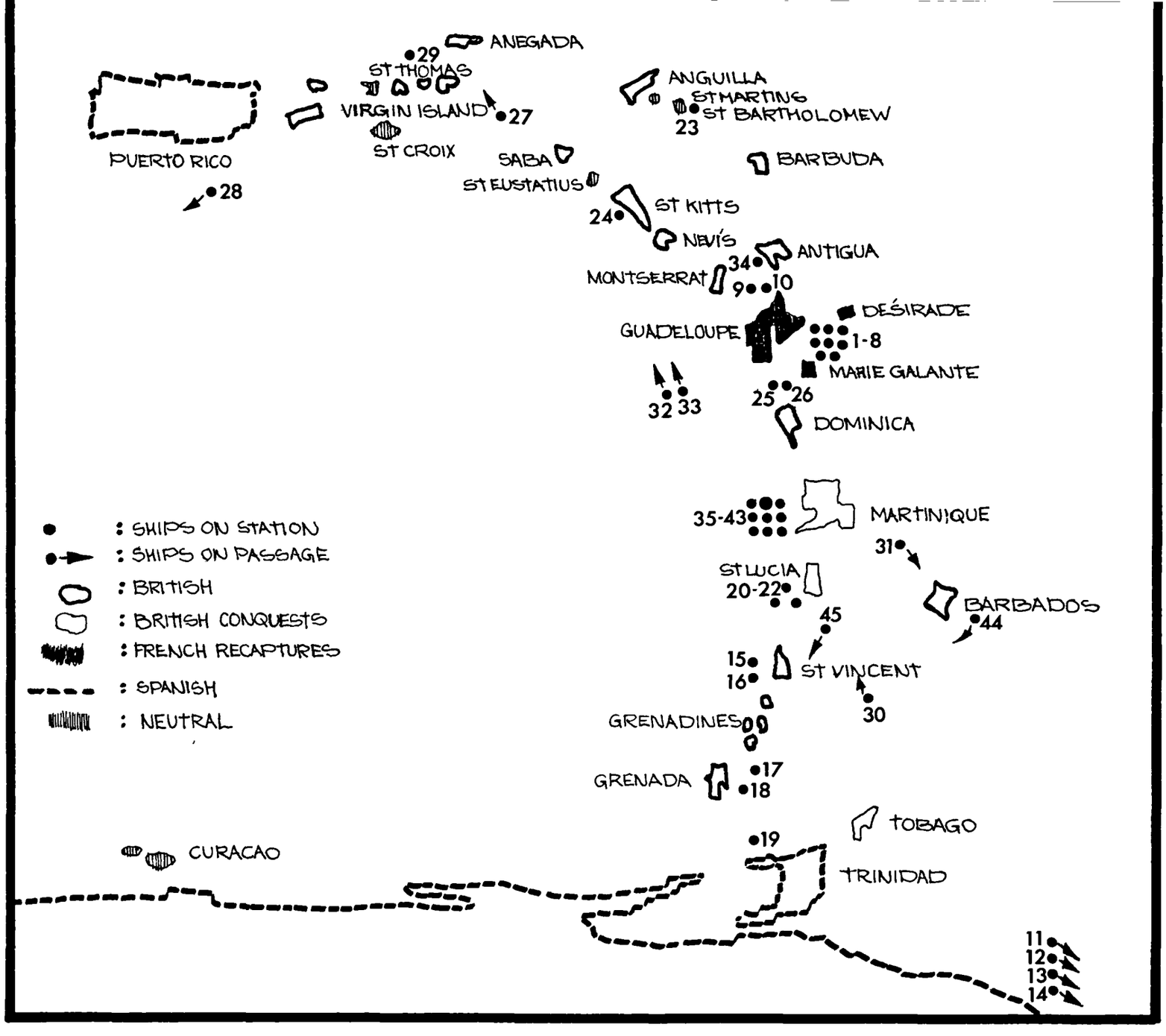
111. See map 3. The information was compiled from a dispositions list enclosed in ADM 1/319: Harvey's journal, July 1, 1796.



MAP 3. Dispositions of Leewards Squadron. July1, 1796

1-8 REAR-ADMIRAL POLE'S SQU CRUISING OFF GUADELOU CARNATIC,74· VENGEANCE, INVINCIBLE,74· VETERAN,6 UNDAUNTED,32· RESOU LAUREL,28

9-10 FRIGATES BEAULIEU,3 AIMABLE,28. OFF GUAD

11-14 SCIPIO,64. PIQUE,38: 28: PROMPTE,20=OFF GUIANA COAST

15-16 EXPERIMENT A4 ARETH WITH ABERCROMBY AT S

17-18 ALARM,32: MERMAID,IG GRENADA

19 LA FAVORITE=PROTECTI OFF TRINIDAD

20-22 GANGES,74=REQUIN,12. TERELLE =AT ST LUCIA

23-24 ARIADNE=AT ST BARTHOL PERDRIX=AT ST KITTS

25-26 WOOLWICH,44,CRACHEFEU AT THE SAINTES

27 FURY=ESCORTING CONVOY TO TORTOLA

28 LACEDAMONIAN-ORD JAMAICA FROM TORTOLA

29 BULLDOG,32 AT TORTOLA

30 VICTORIEUSE,16-ESCORTING C TOBAGO TO ST KITTS

31 HEBE-CONVOYING TROOPS TO B

32-33 MINOTAUR,74, SHEERNESS, JOIN HOMEWARD-BOUND ASSEMBLING AT ST KITT

34 MATILDA,24=REFITTING ENGLISH HARBOUR

35-43 MAIN SQUADRON UNDE REAR-ADMIRAL HARVEY FORT ROYAL, MARTINIQU PRINCE OF WALES,98[:THUNDERER,74: BELLO : VANGUARD,74: ROEBU : QUEBEC,32: THORN,1 L'ETRUSCO&TERROR,

45 CHARM / ORDERED TO ST VINCENT TO EMBARK TROOPS FOR BARBADOS

44 PELICAN,18,/CRUISING BARBADOS

seemed probable that a combined cruise was being prepared, especially since Solano might sail to Havana, Port of Spain or Cartagena without any fear of being challenged. To meet the threat, the Admiralty ordered the station commanders of Jamaica and the Leeward Islands to join forces and rendezvous their squadrons at St. Nicolas Mole, San Domingo. It was very fortunate that this instruction did not have to be carried out. Had Harvey taken his squadron to San Domingo, the entire Leewards station would have been left defenceless against Richery's arrival at Guadeloupe or the combined Franco-Spanish squadrons at Trinidad. The suspense continued during July and August and the Admiralty only discovered the enemy movements many weeks later. In fact Richery's squadron had sailed independently from Cadiz on August 4th, bound for Newfoundland. Solano did likewise a few days later, en route for Havana, where he arrived on September 6th with five ships-of-the-line.[113]

On October 6th, 1796 Spain declared war upon the enemies of France. Events in Europe precipitated the crisis, but in the background lay her age-old resentment of British colonial activity in the Caribbean. The occupation of Tobago[114] and the

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112) The Richery incident is documented in:
113) ADM 1/319: Harvey to Nepean, July - November, 1796, and Spencer Papers (N.R.S.) vol. iii, pp. 215 - 221; 228 - 242.

114. q.v. ante, p. 18-19.

landings on San Domingo[115] were regarded as the most recent examples of foreign interference in her ancient Empire. But Spain lacked the means of defending her Caribbean possessions. Although strong on paper, the Spanish navy had deteriorated as a result of years of inactivity and corruption. In addition to Admiral Solano's squadron, recently arrived at Havana, there were warships stationed in Hispaniola, Puerto Rico, Trinidad and in ports along the Spanish Main. But they were mostly frigates and sloops in appalling condition and without proper crews to man them. Curiously, France at first gained most by the Spanish declaration of war in October. As the vulnerable Spanish colonies drew the British forces southwards like a magnet, so the pressure upon Guadeloupe was relieved. The myriad harbours and creeks of the Spanish possessions became openly available to the French privateers, and by the end of 1796 nearly three hundred were operating from them.

The opportunity to acquire, with little apparent risk, more colonies in the Caribbean at the expense of Spain was an irresistible temptation to the British Government. Instructions were given to Harvey's squadron and the military forces to prepare for successive assaults on Trinidad and Puerto Rico. But the attack on Trinidad was delayed until February 1797, mainly because of the appalling casualties suffered by the army in the

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115. q.v. chapter 2, pp. 78-9.

Caribbean. In the Leeward Islands alone, 2,500 troops had died of yellow fever in the summer of 1796 and in the whole theatre the death roll had reached over 40,000 since the beginning of the war.[116] Faced with such slaughter, even the Government was momentarily deterred. But it was not prepared to forego the prize and sanctioned the expedition early in 1797, the only proviso made being that the campaign should be as short as possible.

General Abercromby was recalled from England to lead the military force and the expedition's preparations at Martinique were completed by the end of January. On February 12th, Harvey's main squadron[117] set sail from Fort Royal and linked up with the convoy carrying 4,000 troops, off the Grenadines. Trinidad was reached four days later and in Shaggaramus Bay, Harvey surprised a Spanish squadron of four ships-of-the-line and a frigate.[118] Outnumbered and badly undermanned, Rear-Admiral de Apodaca set fire to his ships during the night of February 17th, and the squadron were only able to rescue one 74, the San Damaso, from the conflagration. At one stroke Harvey had

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116. Fortescue: History of the British Army, vol. iii, p. 496.

117. Comprising 5 ships-of-the-line, 2 frigates, 5 sloops and a bomb-vessel. See Capt. Thomas Southey: 'Chronological History of the West Indies', vol. III, p. 136.

118. The San Vincente, 84, (flagship); Gallardo, 74; Arrogante, 74; San Damaso, 74; Santa Cecilia, 36. Steel's Naval Chronologist, xxxv.

eliminated Spanish naval power in the Eastern Caribbean. The capitulation of Trinidad followed immediately.[119]

After triumph at Trinidad, came failure against Puerto Rico. The early stages of both operations, however, were very similar. On April 8th, 1797 transports with 3,500 troops on board sailed from Basseterre, St Kitts, heavily escorted by Harvey's squadron. Ten days later the troops disembarked on Puerto Rico. But there the similarity ended. The defences of the main town, San Juan, proved unexpectedly strong; in particular the fortifications around Il Morro castle were impregnable to bombardment by sea. Nor could the troops make any progress ashore, where the land forts encircling San Juan were proof against enfilade. After only two weeks' effort, Harvey and Abercromby had to agree upon an evacuation. It was obvious that a protracted and costly campaign, expressly discouraged by the Government, lay ahead.[120] The repulse at Puerto Rico confirmed Abercromby's growing doubts concerning the value of further Caribbean operations. His return to England in August 1797 coincided with the Government's decision, long demanded by the Treasury, to do nothing further.

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119. Accounts of the Trinidad Campaign are in: ADM 1/320: Harvey to Nepean, February 21, 1797 and, secondary sources; James ... ii, 109 et seq; Southey ... iii, pp. 136 - 137.

120. ADM 1/320: Harvey to Nepean, May 2nd, 1797.

Naval operations during the remainder of Harvey's command were confined to trade protection and cruising against the privateers. The conclusion of the island campaigns in 1797 indeed marked the station's end as a theatre of major operations. This trend continued, with minor exceptions, under Harvey's successors until the Peace of Amiens in March 1802. Admiral Lord Hugh Seymour in the late summer of 1799 captured the Dutch colonies of Surinam[121] and Curaçao,[122] Finally his successor, Rear-Admiral Duckworth, used the squadron to seize the Swedish island of St Bartholomew in March 1801.[123]

For over six years, the Leeward Islands station had been an important theatre of war. At the outset the weakness of the squadron had placed the British colonies in jeopardy. Had the French not been distracted by revolts in their own possessions, they must have made substantial gains. Conversely, if the Leewards squadron had been adequate in 1793 it would have been able to take advantage of the disunity in the French islands. This initial unpreparedness cost dear for it was only during the Grey-Jervis expedition of 1794 that the initiative was regained and the squadron became properly equipped to play its part. But

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121. Southey ... III, 163; Steel ... lxxxvii.

122. Ibid ... III, 174 - 175

123. Ibid.... III, 189; Steel ... lxxxviii; Naval Chronicle, xviii, 15.

much of the power was dissipated in supporting the army during the many amphibious campaigns which followed. Thus the enemy were allowed to recover in 1795 - a disastrous year, in which Guadeloupe remained in French hands, Victor Hugues' campaign reached its climax and enemy privateering grew alarmingly. The situation was restored only with the eventual arrival of the second expeditionary force in March 1796, and the campaign of reconquest which followed. The entry of Spain and Holland to the ranks of the enemy in 1796 enlarged and complicated the station's problems but in no way threatened its control over the area. Overcoming the suppleness and cunning of the French "guerre de course" remained the greatest difficulty; above all, operating against large numbers of enemy privateers with insufficient small warships in the squadron.[124] With this notable exception, it was clear by 1798 that, despite numerous mistakes and reverses and at great cost in men and arms, full naval and military control of the area had been gained.

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124. One secondary authority suggests that by 1801, enemy privateering in the Leewards station had practically ceased: Southey ... III, 189: 'Privateering seems nearly to have been given up ... only one French and one Spanish privateer are said to have been taken in those seas'. But this view is belied by the numerous references to privateers contained in the station admiral's journals, 1799 - 1801. (ADM 1/322 - 1/323).

CHAPTER 2

JAMAICA AND THE STRUGGLE FOR SAN DOMINGO, 1793 - 1798

Many of the problems which confronted the commanders-in-chief of the Jamaica station during the period were similar to those experienced by their colleagues in the Leeward Islands. Protecting vulnerable colonies, organizing convoys to England and cruiser patrols against the enemy's privateers were responsibilities common to both. So, too, was the onerous duty of giving continuous support to the army in numerous amphibious operations. Administrative problems inherent to an overseas station fell equally heavily on both - the difficult of manning and victualling the squadron, the inadequacy of the local dockyards and the chronic shortage of warships, especially frigates and sloops. Likewise hurricanes and yellow fever prevailed throughout the Caribbean.

Yet there were striking points of difference between the two, which necessitated an alternative strategy on the Jamaica station. In one respect the naval commander there was very fortunate in being mainly concerned with the protection of one large island, Jamaica itself, and not a large number of scattered colonies. Admittedly, his command embraced the entire Bahamas group and the logwood settlements on the Honduras shore but these always remained subsidiary to the economic and strategic importance of Jamaica, which had been

a British possession since 1655. On the other hand the advantage of having mainly to protect one large island was reduced by its geographical position. Whereas the Lesser Antilles formed the mouth of the Caribbean, Jamaica lay in its throat. Situated far down the Gulf of Mexico, its sea-routes were dominated by the proximity of enemy-held Cuba, San Domingo and Hispaniola. Moreover, the direction of the prevailing winds forced all the outward-bound trade from Jamaica to sail through the Windward Passage or the Yucatan Channel en route to North America and Europe.[125]

The most important differences between the two commands, however, were political in origin. The series of revolts which had broken out in the French West Indian islands before 1793 ran dissimilar courses. Those on Guadeloupe, Martinique and elsewhere in the Lesser Antilles, either subsided or were ultimately absorbed by British occupation.[126] This was not so on San Domingo. There the revolt grew in dimensions until reaching a climax in the triumph of Toussaint l'Ouverture and the evacuation of the British forces in 1798. For six years the struggle between France, Britain and its native inhabitants for possession of San Domingo dominated the theatre and inevitably the Jamaica squadron was drawn into the vortex. Such

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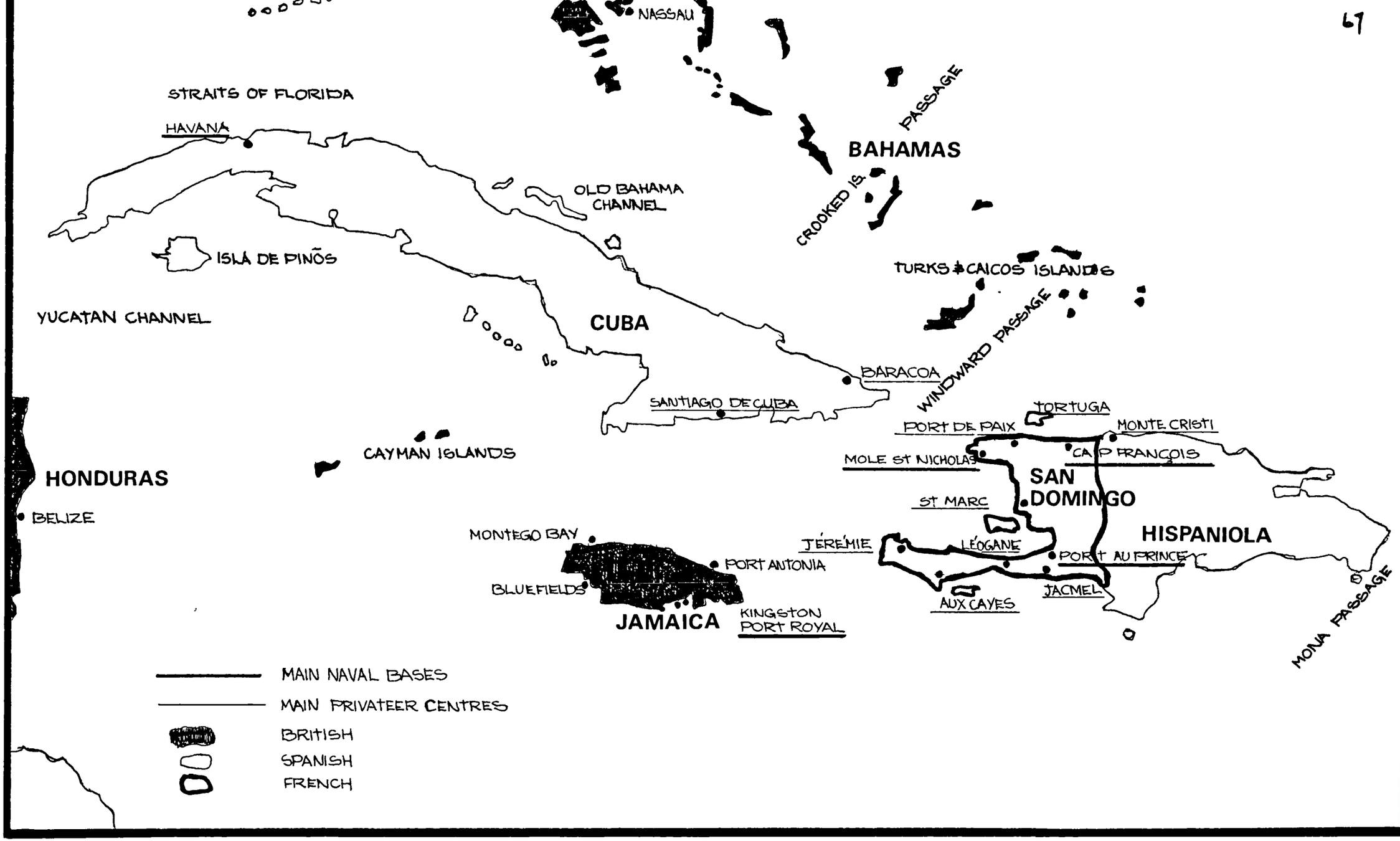
125. See map 4, p. 67.

126. See chapter 1, pp. 16-17.



MAP 4. The Jamaica Station.

concentration upon one area contrasted sharply with events in the Leeward Islands, where events ebbed and flowed from one island to the next. Finally the attitude of Spain could never be ignored by the station admiral at Jamaica. After she entered the war on the French side in October 1796, the proximity of Cuba and Hispaniola and the vulnerability of the logwood settlements on the Mosquito shore were arguments which necessitated an adjustment of command strategy.

San Domingo intruded upon the station's affairs long before the Anglo-French declaration of war in February 1793. Disturbances amongst the native population broke out early in 1791, following the publication of egalitarian decrees by the National Convention in Paris. The revolt was crushed with great severity after the arrival of a squadron under Admiral de Girardin, bringing 6,000 troops to the aid of the white settlers.[127] Restoration of order, however, was shortlived and the prelude to more serious upheavals. Further decrees passed in the National Assembly, including one which granted full citizenship to all French colonists, provoked a second negro uprising and by midsummer 1791, the island was engulfed in civil war. In September the white settlers outlawed the decrees and proclaimed their adherence to the royalist cause. By the end of the year over 100,000 rebels were in arms on

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127. Léon Guèrin: 'Histoire de la Marine Contemporaine de France' (Paris; 1855); p. 117.

San Domingo and both Admiral de Girardin, the French naval commander-in-chief, and General Behague, the military governor, admitted the situation was beyond their control.[128]

Britain long remained a spectator of these events, under Pitt's policy of strict neutrality. Urgent appeals for intervention, both by the San Domingo settlers to the Governor of Jamaica and by Monsieur de Charmilly's royalist delegation in London, fell upon deaf ears. The furthest that Pitt and Grenville would go was to authorize reinforcement of the Jamaica garrison. This was clearly necessary, since large numbers of refugees from the civil war in San Domingo were pouring into Jamaica. There was danger, too, of the rebellion spreading to the British colony, where the plantation slaves were becoming restless. Three infantry battalions were therefore sent from England during 1792 and smaller detachments arrived later from Cork, Gibraltar and Halifax, Nova Scotia.

The Jamaica squadron was at that time in no position to take positive action. Its commander since June 1789, Rear-Admiral Philip Affleck,[129] had for three years never more than a handful of frigates and sloops at his disposal.[130] When he

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128. Léon Guèrin: 'Histoire de la Marine Contemporaine de France (Paris; 1855); pp. 121 - 122 and Bryan Edwards': 'History of the West Indies' (London; 1801); vol. III - 'History of San Domingo', pp. 98-9.

129. Biographical details in: D.N.B. i, 171 - 172; Charnock vi, 346; Naval Chronicle xxi, 445.

130. See over.

gave up the command in May 1792, his final report to the Admiralty ended with the words: 'this island (Jamaica) expresses much uneasiness at so little force being left for their protection'.[131] Indeed the weakness of the squadron, without one single ship-of-the-line, persisted into the early months of 1793. The presence of two French squadrons, including first-rates, cruising off San Domingo and Martiniqye added to the anxiety. Although their purpose was to assist in quelling the revolts on those islands, it was obvious that in the event of war they would be a serious threat to Affleck's force. In another direction, the Jamaica squadron's ability to operate efficiently was in jeopardy. Two days before the war broke out, a report prepared for the Navy Board revealed that the state of the main naval base at Port Royal, Jamaica, was far from satisfactory.[132] Although the careening wharves and capstan houses were in reasonable repair, the mast-house

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130. ADM 8/66 and ADM 8/68: Admiralty office, Ship list Registers - Jamaica Station:

i. December 1790 4 frigates - Blonde, Diana, Centurion, Juno; 5 sloops - Brune, Alert, Serpent, Cygnet, Hound.

ii. November 1792 4 frigates - Penelope, Proserpine, Triton, Hyaena; 5 sloops - Falcon, Flirt, Serpent, Cygnet, Hound

131. ADM 1/244: Affleck to Stephens, May 20, 1792.

132. ADM 1/245: Report by Naval Storekeepers of the Jamaica Yard, William Smith and Hugh Fishey to the Commissioners of the Navy Board, January 31, 1793.

and store magazines were structurally decayed and seriously understocked. Other warehouses, sheds and boat-houses at Kingston and Greenwich were found to be in the same condition.

In spite of these difficulties the squadron did its best to assist the victims of the civil war in San Domingo. In September 1791, Affleck sent his ships in to Port-au-Prince and Cap François to embark refugees, although by so doing he left the entire defence of Jamaica in the hands of two sloops. Two months later one of his frigates escorted merchantmen bringing food to the port of Aux Cayes, where the besieged white settlers were in danger of starvation.[133]

These gestures by themselves could not affect the general situation on San Domingo which became increasingly chaotic. At the end of 1791 the whole eastern part of the country was in rebel hands. Although a French squadron of two ships-of-the-line and five frigates under Admiral Grimouard arrived at Cap François with a convoy of military transports, order was not restored. France made one last attempt to do so in March 1792, when she despatched three civil commissioners to San Domingo, with powers to dissolve the colonial assemblies and act as mediators between the white settlers and the negro rebels. The results proved very different to what was intended. Two of the commissioners - Santhonax and Poverel - were fanatical

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133. ADM 1/244: Affleck to Stephens, September 13 and December 11, 1791.

republicans, who within weeks of their arrival at Cap François had identified themselves with the cause of the rebels. They utterly refused to accept the white settlers' point of view, condemning many of them as royalists. By the end of 1792, two admirals, the military governor and the president of the San Domingo Assembly had been removed from office.[134]

Far from relieving the chaos, the commissioners' dictatorial methods only succeeded in aggravating it. By alienating the white settlers they drove them to summoning outside aid; by supporting the negro rebels they encouraged their hopes of achieving complete independence. Furthermore, the successive dismissals of two naval commanders-in-chief in six months seriously weakened French naval strength in the area.[135] In June 1792, Admiral Grimouard was sent back to France with three ships-of-the-line and two frigates,[136] which were not replaced. His successor, Admiral Girardin, stayed at Cap François until January 1793 with a force greatly superior to the Jamaica squadron.[137] But just before war was declared he too was dismissed and returned home with most of his squadron.[138]

134, 135. Léon Guèrin: 'Histoire de la Marine Contemporaine de France', p. 155; p. 172.

136. Borée, 74; Duguay-Trouin, 74; Fougeux, 74; Uranie, 36; Prudente, 36.

137. Three ships-of-the-line and one frigate were based at Cap François (L'Eole, 74; America, 74; Jupiter, 74; Surveillant, 3(Two more frigates and three sloops alternated between Port-au-Prince, St. Marc and Port-de-Paix, as the situation demanded.

138. Léon Guèrin ...: p. 211.

Even the outbreak of war in February 1793 had no immediate effect upon the situation in San Domingo and seven months passed before Britain intervened. The reason for the delay was military and naval unpreparedness. Having ultimately decided to act, the nation did not immediately have the means to do so. Britain's small military forces were fully occupied in Europe and there was no prospect of an overseas expedition being despatched for some time.

When Commodore John Ford arrived at Port Royal on January 3rd, 1793, to assume command, he brought only one small ship-of-the-line[139] to augment the station force of four frigates and five sloops. It did not take him long to realize the squadron's inadequacy. As soon as war was declared he ordered it to moor in a crescent outside Port Royal in order to protect the dockyard. Nor was lack of numbers the only difficulty. Appeals for naval protection reached him simultaneously from the north coast of Jamaica, the Bahamas, the Turks and Caicos Islands and the Bay of Honduras. Clearly the small squadron could not satisfy them all. In May, the President of Turks Island thanked Ford for sending the sloop Serpent, but added that she alone would not remove the threat from San Domingo: '... we shall, as soon as the enemy can man their privateers, receive an unwelcome visit from them in our defenceless state'.[140]

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139. H.M.S. Europa, which became the squadron flagship.

140. ADM 1/245: President Andrew Murray to Ford, May 28, 1793.

Two of the Bahama islands sent similar warnings. The Governor of New Providence described how Nassau had been blockaded for weeks by a French frigate lurking outside the harbour. According to his evidence no British warship had been seen in their vicinity since the outbreak of war, except for one sloop which had brought in a prize and then promptly left.[141] In April the assemblies of Great and Little Exuma urgently requested Ford for a sloop to cruize amongst their islands 'against enemy and picaroon privateers'.[142, 143] At the same time he heard from the British consul at Charleston, Virginia, that large numbers of French privateers were fitting out in that harbour.

Ford had to meet the situation with the very limited forces at his command. Two examples of how he disposed his ships in the early months of 1793 clearly show the difficulties.[144] Not only was the squadron far too small. Convoy duty, cruising off San Domingo and the number of ships refitting at Port Royal - were all factors which speedily exhausted its capacity. As a result, naval protection of the Bahamas, Turks and Caicos, Cayman Islands and Windward Passage was either very

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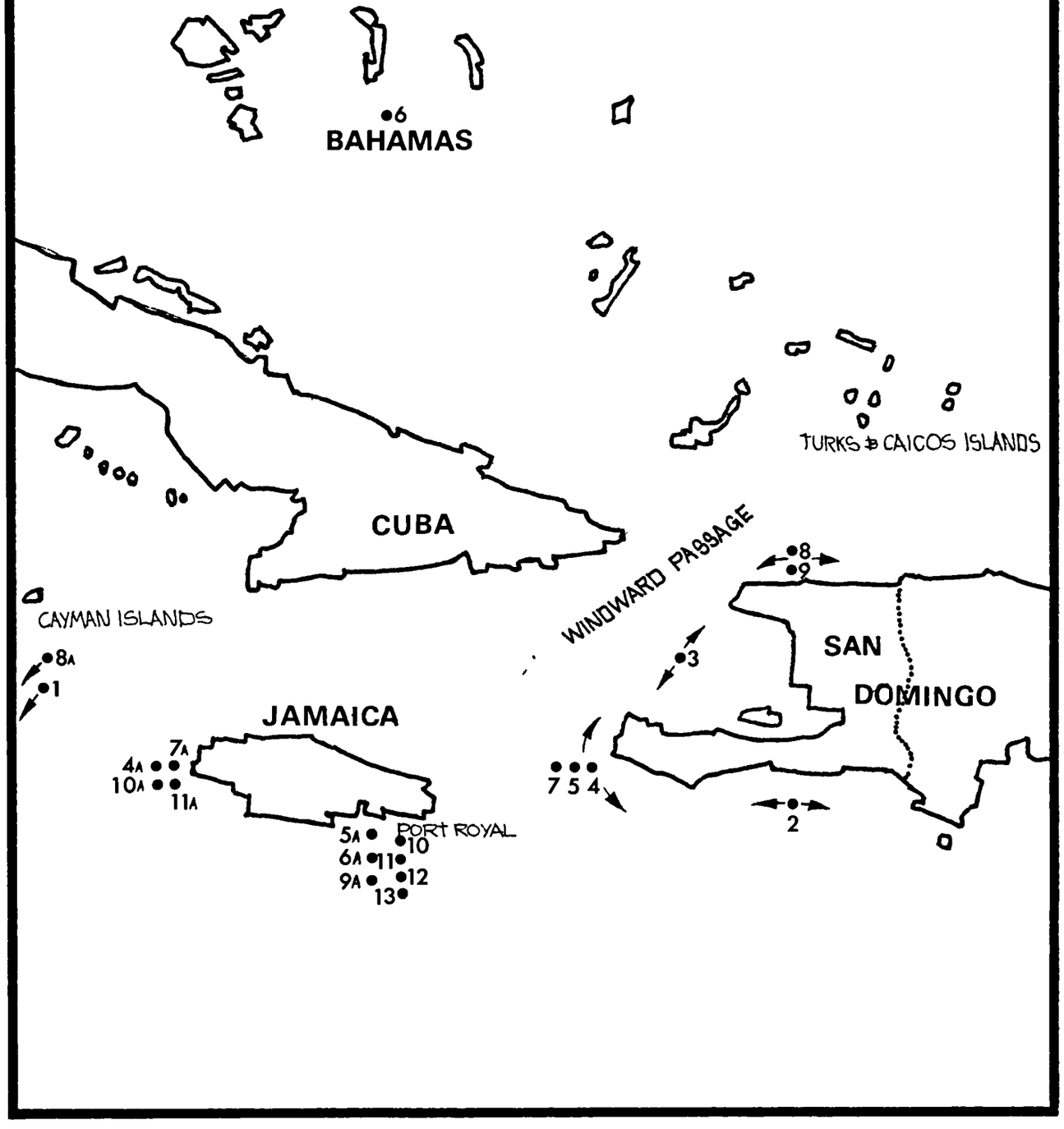
141. ADM 1/245: Governor Dunmore to Ford, April 26, 1793.

142. ADM 1/245: Memorial and petition by Committee ... of Great and Little Exuma to Ford, September 7, 1793.

143. In fact it was not until September 1795 that the Admiralty transferred naval responsibility for the Bahamas from the commander-in-chief, Jamaica to the commander-in-chief, North America station.

144, 145. See Map 5, p. 75.



KEY	SHIP	APRIL 14th 1793	JUNE 9th 1793
1	HOUND, SLOOP	ON PATROL, BAY OF HONDURAS	SAME
2	HYAENA, 32	CRUISING OFF SAN DOMINGO / ÎLE DE VACHE TO ALTAVELLA	SAME
3	PENELOPE, 32	CRUISING OFF SAN DOMINGO / CAPE DONNA MARIA TO THE MOLE	SAME
4, 4A	PROSERPINE, 32	CRUISING OFF SAN DOMINGO / ÎLE DE VACHE TO CAPE DONNA MARIA	AT BLUEFIELDS, JAMAICA / TO COLLECT HONDURAS TRADE AND ESCORT IT THROUGH WINDWARD PASSAGE
5, 5A	EUROPA, 50	SAME	AT PORT ROYAL / LATER TO JOIN HONDURAS CONVOY
6, 6A	SERPENT, SLOOP	ON PATROL / BAHAMAS PASSAGES	REFITTING, PORT ROYAL
7, 7A	FLY, SLOOP	CRUISING OFF SAN DIMINGO TO CAPE DONNA MARIA	AT BLUEFIELDS, JAMAICA / TO COLLECT HONDURAS TRADE
8, 8A	ADVICE SCHOONER	ON PATROL OFF PORT-AU-PRINCE	EN ROUTE TO HONDURAS WITH DESPATCHES
9, 9A	SPITFIRE SCHOONER	SAME	REFITTING / PORT ROYAL
10, 10A	PROVIDENCE SCHOONER	AT PORT ROYAL	AT BLUEFIELDS JAMAICA / TO COLLECT HONDURAS TRADE
11, 11A	ASSISTANT SCHOONER	SAME	SAME
12	GOELAN SCHOONER	—	REFITTING PORT ROYAL
13	MOSQUITO SCHOONE	—	SAME

MAP 5. Disposition of Jamaica Squadron a) April 14, 1793
b) June 9, 1793

temporary or completely non-existent. Nor could Ford spare one warship to cruise off the north coast of Jamaica against privateers.[145]

The acute lack of warships compelled the station admiral to resort to requisitioning local vessels. In June 1793 for instance a 60-ton schooner was purchased, armed with four 3-pounders and commissioned as H.M.S. Spitfire. Nearly half the total squadron at this time consisted of schooners. But, as on the Leewards station, their performance in service was disappointing and cost of conversion high.[146] In fact Ford had to wait over a year before worthwhile additions were made to the squadron locally. Two French corvettes, L'Actif and La Liberté, captured independently off San Domingo in March 1794, were speedily commissioned in the Royal Navy and proved ideal in service.[147]

Until late in 1793, therefore, there was no prospect of the Navy providing adequate support to landings on San Domingo. This inability to intervene at a most opportune moment was to have disastrous consequences. For six months the French colony was practically defenceless, but thereafter the chance for British forces to achieve complete occupation never recurred. When the landings were made, the initial progress was encouraging.

144, 145. See Map 5, p.75.

146. See Chapter 1, pp. 51.

147. ADM 1/245: Ford to Stephens, April 3, 1794.

But the French had been given time to recover; even more important, the negro revolt had reached beyond the stage in which it might have been controlled. In the first half of 1793, San Domingo was an open door; by the autumn, it was half-ajar and beginning to close.

British intervention however did not take place until September 1793. The Governor of Jamaica had earlier been instructed to accept any offers of capitulation from San Domingo. In July the leader of the French royalists in London told Dundas, the Secretary for War, that two coastal towns in the south-west penninsula - Jérémie and Grand Anse[148] - were prepared to surrender to a British force.[149] At the same time a certain Major Carles, a member of the San Domingo House of Assembly, was captured at sea by a Bahamas privateer and taken into Nassau. There he disclosed that the key base of Mole St. Nicolas was equally anxious to receive British protection. Carles was hurriedly sent on to Jamaica to bring the news to the Governor.[150] Upon receiving this information from the latter, the Cabinet at last decided to act and in August a convention was signed between Charmilly and Dundas declaring the colony a British

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148. See Map 6: San Domingo, p.99.

149. WO 7/8: M. de Charmilly to Dundas, July 16, 1793.

150. ADM 1/245: Ford to Stephens, July 22, 1793.

protectorate. From this moment and not before, Britain and her forces on the Jamaica station became directly involved in San Domingo.

Plans were hurriedly drawn up to occupy Jérémie and Mole St. Nicolas. But the logistic difficulties soon became apparent. Only 900 soldiers were immediately available from the Jamaica garrison and the escort of even such a small force would require most of Ford's squadron. Nevertheless on September 9th, the Europa, two frigates, a sloop and three schooners sailed from Port Royal with the expeditionary force under Lieutenant-Colonel Whitelocke.[151] Only two small warships remained behind to guard the whole station: the frigate Penelope, cruising off the north coast of San Domingo, and the sloop Hound in the Bay of Honduras.

In spite of lack of numbers the expedition gained immediate success, the continuing chaos on the island preventing the French from opposing the landing. Jérémie was occupied on September 19th without a shot being fired and three days later the strategically vital anchorage and fort of Mole St. Nicolas was in British hands. In Ford's words the latter presented: ' ... the extraordinary spectacle of one of the finest harbours in the West Indies, guarded with one hundred cannon, being in the quiet possession of one fifty-gun ship.'[152] The capture

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151. ADM 1/245: Same to same, September 12, 1793.

152. ADM 1/245: Ford to Stephens, September 26, 1793.

of the Mole was a major strategic success. It dominated the Windward Passage, through which the bulk of the Jamaica trade passed homeward-bound to England. It was a major resort of enemy privateers and, moreover, the most suitable base for the Jamaica squadron after Port Royal.

The French were in no doubt as to the seriousness of the loss and in October made two attempts to retake the Mole. Commissioner Santhonax marched overland at the head of 5,000 men and got as far as Port-de-Paix. There he was halted by the terrain; ahead lay the impassable mountains of the Nord Ouest Massif, with no roads and little water.[153] He then tried a flank attack along the north coast, embarking his men in armed transports and local craft. But two of Ford's frigates blockaded the enemy flotilla in Port-de-Paix and Santhonax was repulsed.[154]

Five more coastal towns fell to British arms during 1793 against little resistance.[155] Their possession gave the squadron partial control of the Bight of Léogâne.[156] But these successes concealed a potentially dangerous situation. As more positions were occupied it became necessary to divide and then subdivide

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153. Léon Guèrin: 'Histoire de la Marine Contemporaine de France', p. 279.

154. ADM 1/345: Ford to Stephens, October 27, 1793.

155. Jean Rabel, St. Marc, L'Arcahaye and Boucassin in the north; Léogâne in the south. See map 6.

156. See map 6, p. 99.

a force which had been small in the first place. Without reinforcements or protection against yellow fever the isolated garrisons began to dwindle. By December only 400 troops remained at Jérémie, 200 at the Mole and even less elsewhere. Quite soon the mood of the local inhabitants, who had at first welcomed the British, changed when they realized such small numbers gave them no protection against the French or the rebels

Colonel Whitelocke and Governor Williamson sent urgent appeals for military reinforcements without success. Dundas, the Secretary for War, could only promise the despatch of two battalions during 1794.[157] Misled by the easily-won success of the campaign so far, he shared in the general optimism at home, which failed to understand the very real anxieties felt by the commander in San Domingo.

Even in its early stages, the demands of the campaign fell as heavily upon the navy as the army. The fact that Ford's small squadron already had more duties than it could cope with has been noted. To these were now added more patrols off the San Domingo coast and the ceaseless ferrying of men and supplies to the isolated garrisons. Surrounded by a hostile hinterland the latter utterly depended on the Navy for survival. At the end of 1793 over three-quarters of the squadron were concentrated in San Domingan waters, to the detriment of the

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157. WO/6/5: Dundas to Governor Williamson, December 4, 1793.

rest of the station.[158]

The only solution to this problem was a larger squadron but throughout the whole of 1793 not a single major warship joined the station. The need became so desperate in both Jamaica and the Leeward Islands that quarrels broke out between their commanders-in-chief. In June 1793 the Admiralty assured Ford that two ships-of-the-line and two frigates would be transferred to him from the Leewards station after the Martinique campaign. When it failed Vice-Admiral Gardner sent only one frigate, with a curt note that the situation did not allow him to supply the others. Ford was furious and complained to the Admiralty but without satisfaction.[159]

For the Jamaica command, 1794 was a year of mixed fortunes. In the early months two important gains were made on San Domingo, which continued to hold the centre of the stage. Tiburon, at the apex of the southermost of the two peninsulas which jutted far out into the Windward Passage, was taken by amphibious assault in February.[160] Apart from its strategic position, the place was a notorious refuge of privateers. It was followed a few weeks later by the capture of another privateer stronghold, Aux Cayes, which left most of the coastal

158. A dispositions list attached to Ford's r port to Stephens, November 24, 1793, shows this to have been so. (ADM 1/245).

159. ADM 1/245: Ford to Stephens, July 6, 1793.

160. Capt. Thomas Southey: 'Chronological History of the West Indies', vol. III, p. 88.

towns of the southern peninsula in British hands.[161]

The summer of 1794 marked the high-water mark of British achievement. It had always been thought, both in London and Kingston, that the occupation of Port-au-Prince would have a decisive effect upon the campaign. It was the country's most heavily-populated city, the chief port and administrative capital. Around lay the numerous sugar plantations of the fertile cul de sac plain. Both Governor Williamson and Ford rightly refused to embark on such a considerable operation until reinforcements arrived from England, for which they estimated at least 5,000 troops were needed.[162] After weeks of waiting a convoy including military transports arrived at the Mole on May 18th; on board were three infantry regiments under Brigadier Whyte which had embarked at Cork.[163] To Ford's satisfaction, the escort of two ships-of-the-line and a sloop was attached to his squadron.[164]

Although the rainy season had begun and the command was beginning to suffer severely from yellow fever, Ford and Whyte agreed upon an immediate expedition against Port-au-Prince, before the disease spread to the new arrivals and the favourable

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161. The most important exception was Jacmel, a key enemy privateer base.

162. WO 6/5: Governor Williamson to Dundas, February 9, 1794.

163. Ibid. The force totalled 1,600 men.

164. Irresistible, 74; Belliqueux, 74; and Fly, 16.

situation in San Domingo changed. While some French royalists were added to the Irish regiments, Ford brought together at the Mole as many ships as he could muster. On May 25th the expedition sailed, Ford's squadron of 4 ships-of-the-line, 3 frigates and some smaller vessels escorting the convoy of transports.[165] A landing was made in Lamentin Bay in the L'Arcahaye roads and, after a brief engagement near Cabaret, the enemy retired upon the capital. Taking advantage of a tropical storm, the expedition made a sudden advance upon Port-au-Prince which capitulated on June 4th. The enemy retreated in disorder to Jacmel, where commissioners Santhonax and Poverel were divested of their authority and put on board a frigate bound for France. In the harbour of Port-au-Prince, 38 small ships including many privateers fell into British hands.[166]

Triumphant as the operation had been, yet the seizure of the capital did not end the San Domingo campaign. Although the resistance of the French had indeed been broken, their place was now taken by a more powerful enemy. The several bands of

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165. The first indication that the line-strength of the squadron, at least, had grown. = Europa, 50 (flagship); Irresistible, 74; Belliqueux, 74; Sceptre, 64; Hermione, 32; Penelope, 32; Iphigenia, 32; Fly, 16, and 4 schooners.

166. Capt. Thomas Southey: 'Chronological History of the West Indies', III, p. 91., and A.D.M. 1/245: Ford to Stephens, June 4, 1794. The displacement of the prizes ranged between 40 and 700 tons and included snows, polacres and brigs. (List attached to Ford's despatch).

negro rebels on the island began to assert their position. The careers of their leaders Rigaud, Jean François and others foreshadowed the remarkable ascendance of Toussaint L'Ouverture, he who was ultimately to transform the French colony of San Domingo into the negro republic of Haiti. Only the preliminary rumblings of the eruption sounded at this stage and were completely ignored in Britain. But the warning did not go unheeded by the French forces still on the island. In July 1794, the commissioners' successors as military governor, General Laveaux, proclaimed the rising fortunes of Toussaint l'Ouverture.[167]

By December Toussaint's forces had gained control of the whole northern province except for the area around Mole St Nicolas. In the south, another rebel army led by the mulatto Rigaud advanced against the coastal towns thinly garrisoned by British troops. The important port of Léogâne, only twenty miles from Port-au-Prince, was seized in November. On Christmas Day Rigaud struck again. Three thousand of his followers poured into Aux Cayes, where they embarked in a 16-gun brig, three armed schooners and many smaller craft. Creeping along the south coast the flotilla surprised Tiburon before Ford's cruisers could intervene. Yellow fever had reduced the garrison at Tiburon to 500 fit men; after three days

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167. Léon Guèrin: Histoire ... , pp. 313 - 314.

gallant resistance it surrendered and the rebels blew up a British armed transport in the harbour.[168]

Although the remaining garrisons held out - particularly at Port-au-Prince and the Mole - their survival against the rebels and yellow fever could not be prolonged unless reinforcements were brought in. The latter's toll is shown by the state of the garrisons in January 1795:-

Garrison	English Troops effective	English Troops sick	Colonial Troops effective	Colonial Troops sick
Port-au-Prince	366	462	496	48
Mole St Nicolas	209	166	209	38
Jérémie	95	59	n/a	n/a
St Marc	48	33	813	321

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Nor did the capture of Port-au-Prince ease the situation for the Jamaica squadron, which fared as badly as the army during the second half of 1794. The loss of the Tiburon base was a severe blow. Not only was command of the Windward Passage weakened, but in enemy hands it threatened the supply-line to the British garrisons further down the peninsula. Jérémie was difficult to sustain and the Gonaive channel became so infested with privateers that vessels bound for Port-au-Prince

168. ADM 1/245: Ford to Stephens, January 5, 1795.

169. Bryan Edwards: 'History of the West Indies', vol. III: 'Historical Survey of San Domingo', p. 204. Note the coloured troops' much greater resistance to yellow fever.

and St Marc had to sail the long way round via Mole St Nicolas and the St Marc channel.[170]

In the lull which followed the loss of Tiburon, little was done to strengthen the squadron in the direction needed. Although another ship-of-the-line and a 44 joined the station in July,[171] it was frigates and sloops in quantity which were required. Thus Ford writing to the Admiralty in March 1795: '... I am in very great distress for want of small vessels to carry on the King's service, as the different possessions we have to protect on San Domingo require more than the whole squadron, which are only two pendants[172] more than when I took the command in peace. Lord Dunmore[173] complains he has not a vessel at Providence; a similar complaint arises from the logwood cutters in Honduras. The Governor of Jamaica, now the troops are away, requests a frigate or two to guard the north side (of the island). In this awkward predicament, I require every assistance and unless reinforcements arrive all is lost.'[174]

170. See map 6, p. 99.

171. Intrepid, 64; Chichester, 44.

172. That is, commissioned ships of the Royal Navy.

173. The eccentric and impetuous Governor of the Bahamas. See: Michael Craton: 'A History of the Bahamas', pp. 173 - 187; D.N.B. xiii, p. 1285.

174. ADM 1/245: Ford to Stephens, March 4, 1795.

In February 1795, a change took place in the station command. Under the normal three-year appointment, Ford would have remained in command until the end of that year. There is no evidence, however, that the Admiralty had become critical of his conduct. Although not stated at the time, the reason was a breakdown in Ford's health.[175] In his place the Admiralty chose Rear-Admiral William Parker, who seemed admirably fitted for the command. Fifty-two years old, he had considerable experience of the West Indies and action at sea. A post-captain under Barrington and Byron during the American War of Independence, he had commanded the Audacious, 74, during her memorable action with Le Révolutionnaire, 120, in May 1794. But his greatest recommendation arose from his past service as commander-in-chief of the Leewards station between 1787 and 1790.[176]

Wearing his flag in Raisonable and with four other warships in company,[177] Parker sailed from Plymouth on February 15th 1795 with the outward-bound trade. After a passage of forty-one days the whole convoy reached Barbados intact. There the Leewards station admiral, Vice-Admiral Caldwell, urgently requested Parker for naval assistance. Evading these appeals,

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175. The explanation appears in ADM 1/245: William Parker to Nepean, April 16, 1795. Evan Nepean succeeded Philip Stephens as First Secretary at the Admiralty in March 1795.

176. Biographical details in D.N.B. xi, pp. 287 - 288; Ralfe, ii, pp. 45 et seq.

177. Medusa, 50; Solebay, 32; and two 16-gun sloops, Cormorant and Dromedary.

Parker proceeded with the Jamaica trade to within 150 miles of Kingston, where he parted company and sailed directly to Mole St Nicolas. There he took over command of the station on April 15th.[178]

Parker's arrival in San Domingo brought some welcome reinforcement to the command. But the chief benefit was on the military side. At the end of 1794 the Secretary for War had at last become aware of the precarious situation of the remaining British garrisons on the island.[179] Five infantry regiments had been hurriedly got together and put aboard transports which sailed with Parker's convoy.[180] They arrived just in time to prevent a military collapse.

The naval reinforcement was far less satisfactory. The increase to the squadron by the arrival of Parker's ships was nullified by Ford's departure for England on May 29th, taking two ships-of-the-line and two sloops with him.[181] Although three 74's arrived at the Mole in July,[182] the crucial weakness continued to be the acute shortage of smaller warships in the

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178. ADM 1/246: William Parker to Nepean, March 31, 1795.

179. WO 6/5: Dundas to Governor Williamson, December 8, 1794.

180. Ibid ... December 23, 1794. The units were the 81st and 96th of foot and three Irish regiments, the 40th, 44th and 63rd, making a total of 6,445 men.

181. Europa, 50; Belliqueux, 74; Magicienne, 16; and Swan, 16.

182. Leviathan, Hannibal and Swiftsure - all 74's.

squadron. That this had long been a feature on the station has already been emphasised, but during Parker's command it became glaringly exposed. This was because the comparative absence of enemy naval activity during Ford's administration helped to conceal the weakness. By 1795, however, the large number of enemy privateers operating over a wide area proclaimed the squadron's inadequacy.

In an important despatch to the Admiralty in June, Parker described the situation with great clarity. ' ... It will be observed that from being obliged to keep a ship constantly at each post at San Domingo, I have not ships to prevent the depredations of the enemy privateers which are very numerous and cruize with much success, not only against the trade between this island (Jamaica) and San Domingo and the coasts of both islands, but our homeward bound trade also ... '[183] He supported his statement with details of the whole squadron's disposition at the time:-

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183. ADM 1/246: William Parker to Nepean, June 29, 1795.

GROUP A (SAN DOMINGO)		GROUP B (JAMAICA AND ELSEWHERE)	
Ship	Disposition	Ship	Disposition
Raisonable, 64 (flagship)	en route to Port-au-Prince with convoy	Medusa, 50 Success, 32 Triton, 28	at Port Royal; two latter under refit
Intrepid, 64 Marie Antoinette, 10	At Port-au-Prince	Cormorant, 16	cruising off north coast of Jamaica
Regulus, 44 Serin, 16	At the Mole	Scorpion, 16	cruizing in the Bahamas passages
Hermione, 32	en route to St Marc	Mosquito, 4	under refit at Providence, Bahamas
Penelope, 32	At St Marc		
Iphigenia, 32	At Irois		

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Important conclusions may be drawn from this evidence. First, over half the squadron - all its heavy ships and most of its frigates - were committed to supporting the San Domingo campaign. Second, only two ships were on cruiser patrol, leaving the enemy privateers to operate almost at will. Moreover, as Parker's ships became directly involved in succouring the isolated San Domingo garrisons, the old practice of regular cruiser patrols off its coasts fell by the wayside.

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184. ADM 1/246: William Parker to Nepean, June 29, 1795.

In particular the vital patrol off the north coast between Alta Vela and Monte Cristi[185] was abandoned. This had always been a reconnaissance area of great importance, in order to keep a watch on the enemy naval base at Cap François and observe the landfall of ships coming in from the Atlantic. Without this patrol, early warning of enemy intentions was lost.

Having described the station's weaknesses, Parker went on to suggest some remedies. Although the number of major warships had risen, there was an urgent need for more sloops. Such vessels, properly armed, were the most suitable for hunting privateers in the restricted waters and narrow channels of the command. Parker asked that ten more sloops be added to the five already on the station. At the same time he warned the Admiralty that it was pointless to continue providing less powerful warships than sloops: ' ... three of the four schooner on this station are entirely useless, because the smallest privateer fitted out is of considerably more force than they ... one has already been taken by the enemy and the others are so poorly armed, having neither guns nor even swivels, only small arms and musquetoons.'[186, 187]

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185. See Map 6, p. 99.

186. ADM 1/246: William Parker to Nepean, June 29, 1795.

187. It was not until three years later that another remedy was suggested, by Parker's successor. Admiral Hyde Parker strongly favoured the use of gunboats, whose shallow draught would make them very suitable for close in-shore work against privateers. Two colonies - the Turks and Caicos Islands and Honduras - specifically asked for them, In the case of the latter, Hyde Parker suggested they might be sent out from England in frames and assembled locally. ADM 1/248: Hyde Parker to Nepean, December 23, 1798.

Turning to the geographical aspect, Parker drew the Admiralty's attention to two areas under increasing attack from privateers. The hundreds of large and small islands, many uninhabited, which formed the Bahamas group were proving a happy hunting ground for the enemy. Moreover the difficult sea-passages through them were vital trade arteries linking the West Indies, Britain and North America. In Parker's opinion, at least two sloops should be permanently stationed at Nassau and New Providence. A second dangerous area lay between Jamaica and San Domingo, across which considerable traffic now passed. Many Jamaica merchants and planters complained bitterly in 1795 of increasing losses through privateer action. Marine insurance rates rose sharply and a cry went up for the organization of regular monthly convoys between the islands. Parker replied that no escort for them could be provided out of his present resources. At least three more warships would have to be added to the squadron to undertake this duty alone: one to escort the outward monthly convoy from Jamaica; another for the return convoy from San Domingo, and a third to protect the Jamaican coast.

Parker's letter of June 29th, 1795, to the Admiralty has been examined in detail because of the light it throws upon the strategic problems of the time. The Admiralty's reaction to his requests is also significant. In the margin of his despatch are written manuscript comments, in the hand of either

Spencer, the First Lord of the Admiralty, or more probably, Evan Nepean, the First Secretary. They fully endorse Parker's argument and promise reinforcements when available. But immediately only two sloops could be provided, for service in the Bahamas.[188] This indeed was the main point; however much the Admiralty agreed with the station admiral, there were never enough sloops or frigates available to supply even half his requests.

Keeping the squadron fully-manned and seaworthy in 1795 were as serious problems as obtaining more ships. Both Caribbean stations were notorious for their lack of suitable manpower and exposure of ships crews to tropical climate and disease. In 1795 the Jamaica squadron was badly undermanned, with no possibility of obtaining replacements by local recruitment.[189] Two years later, Parker's successor knew how imperative it was to bring ships with their full complement aboard, ' ... as I am going to a station where no men are to be got.'[190] Another danger arose from the length of time warships lay at anchor in Port Royal or the garrison ports of San Domingo, increasing their crews' exposure to yellow fever. In the

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188. MS comment in the margin of ADM 1/246: William Parker to Nepean, June 29, 1795.

189. ADM 1/246: William Parker to Nepean, August 22, 1795.

190. ADM 1/247: Hyde Parker to Nepean, July 3, 1797.

summer of 1795, for instance, the Intrepid remained for months in the harbour of Port-au-Prince while her crew wasted away with disease.[191] The shortage of hands aboard merchant ships was even more acute, for which pressing as much as disease was responsible. At least one convoy set sail from Jamaica with its deficit in crew made up by the last-minute inclusion of inmates from the local gaol.

Desertion was another factor which weakened the squadron. Whenever the ships returned to Port Royal their crews were tempted and tricked by the numerous crimps on shore. Merchant shipmasters were often so short of men for the homeward voyage to England that they were prepared to pay extravagant sums in order to get their vessels to sea. Thus the crimp-shops were able to offer a seaman as much as fifty guineas and unlimited quantities of rum to desert the navy and engage for the run home. Local magistrates failed to control the practice which flourished in Kingston and Port Royal. The position became so serious that in September 1795 Parker attempted to intervene. He held meetings with a number of lawyers, merchants and shipmasters warning them that wholesale desertion from the squadron was threatened. His hearers condemned the practice but pointed out that it had been caused by the shortage of crews aboard the merchantmen and by their obligation to sail on fixed dates if

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191. ADM 1/246: William Parker to Nepean, August 22, 1795.

they wished to join the regular convoy. One practical suggestion emerged from the discussions; namely that before a convoy sailed, the escort commander should be empowered to take off all men on board the merchantmen who could not be shown to be engaged in the normal way. In practice the suggestion proved unworkeable.[192] Understandably many shipmasters utterly refused to divulge the arrangements under which their crews had been engaged. Nor could vessels which sailed independently be prevented from continuing to attract deserters from the Navy.[193]

To return to the main sequence of events. With the station already in difficulties early in 1795, matters were made worse by two developments in the latter half of the year. These were the Franco-Spanish treaty and the maroon revolt in Jamaica.

The period of Spanish alliance with Britain against the common enemy was drawing to a close. The reasons for the change of attitude were European in origin, in particular the Francophile policy pursued by Godoy, the Spanish first minister. But events in the Caribbean were a contributory cause. Spain had watched the struggle for San Domingo with jealousy and fear.

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192. When Parker ordered it to be used on the September convoy to England, the escort commander - Captain Thorn of the Medusa - so failed to carry out the admiral's instructions that he was court-martialled.

193. Much of this passage is based on Parker's views on the manning problem, as expressed in two despatches to the Admiralty September 13 and 20, 1795.

British intervention was regarded as an intrusion upon her sphere of interest and a direct threat to her possession of the eastern half of the island, Hispaniola. Another bone of contention was the logwood settlements on the Mosquito coast. The long history of Anglo-Spanish enmity in the West Indies is well-known and readily traceable back through the years to Hawkin and Drake, to Vernon and Pocock.

After a number of preliminary agreements, the Franco-Spanish peace treaty was signed at Basle on July 22nd, 1795. Although Spain did not declare war upon Britain until fifteen months later, the treaty had an immediate effect upon the situation in San Domingo. One of its clauses ceded Hispaniola to France in return for the recognition of certain Spanish claims on the Biscay coast.[194] At one stroke the enemy in San Domingo had thereby gained an invaluable supply-base and nursery of recruitment. Nor was this all. French and negro privateers now had full access to anchorages on the Hispaniola coast, to replace those they had lost to the British Expeditionary Force. Finally, the enemy coastline to be patrolled by Parker's cruisers had doubled in length and the trade-routes between Jamaica and the Leeward Islands were correspondingly less secure.

Henceforth Spanish naval forces in the Caribbean could

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194. See Cambridge Modern History, vol. VIII, p.442.

no longer be ignored. At the end of 1795, Parker was able to provide the Admiralty with full details of their strength and disposition.[195] They comprised eleven ships-of-the-line, eight frigates and several smaller warships under the overall command of Admiral Aristazabal. Many were in appalling condition and badly undermanned. Yet even if they never left harbour their very existence meant a constant watch had to be kept. The Spanish ships were distributed among six naval bases in the Caribbean, three of which directly concerned the Jamaica station:-

Base	Ships
HAVANA, Cuba	San Juan, 74; La Firme, 74;[196] three frigates, three sloops and two corvettes.
PORT DAUPHIN, Hispaniola	San Isabella, 74; San Ramon, 68; San Léandro, 64; and three brigs.
VERA CRUZ, Mexico	San Iago la España, 68; San Pedro Alcantara, 64; one frigate and two brigs.

[197]

Bearing in mind how fully committed the Jamaica squadron

195. ADM 1/246: Parker to Nepean, December 9, 1795. Parker obtained the information from a Spanish naval officer stationed at Port Dauphin, who turned spy.

196. Ex-French.

197. ADM 1/246: Parker to Nepean, December 9, 1795.

was in 1795/6, it was fortunate that these warships did not become an active enemy until after Spain's declaration of war in October 1796. On the other hand the commander-in-chief Jamaica could not foresee to what an extent Spanish torpor and the ships' state of unreadiness would blunt their impact when the time came.

In July 1795 a serious uprising amongst the maroons and negro slaves broke out in Jamaica; resistance was prolonged until the end of the year in the wild Cockpit country of the northern highlands. The origins and progress of the revolt are not relevant to this study, but its consequences are. Military reinforcements scheduled for San Domingo had to remain in Jamaica and at the height of the emergency troops were brought back from San Domingo in order to assist Governor Balcarres.[198] On the naval side, Parker was instructed to base more ships at Port Royal and increase the cruiser patrols along the north coast, to protect the more isolated villages and plantations. Just when it was most needed, the pressure on San Domingo had therefore to be relaxed.

The possibility of failure in San Domingo never occurred to the British Government in 1795. The Secretary for War considered the military setbacks temporary and wrote to General Forbes in September: ' ... you will be reinforced by an armament

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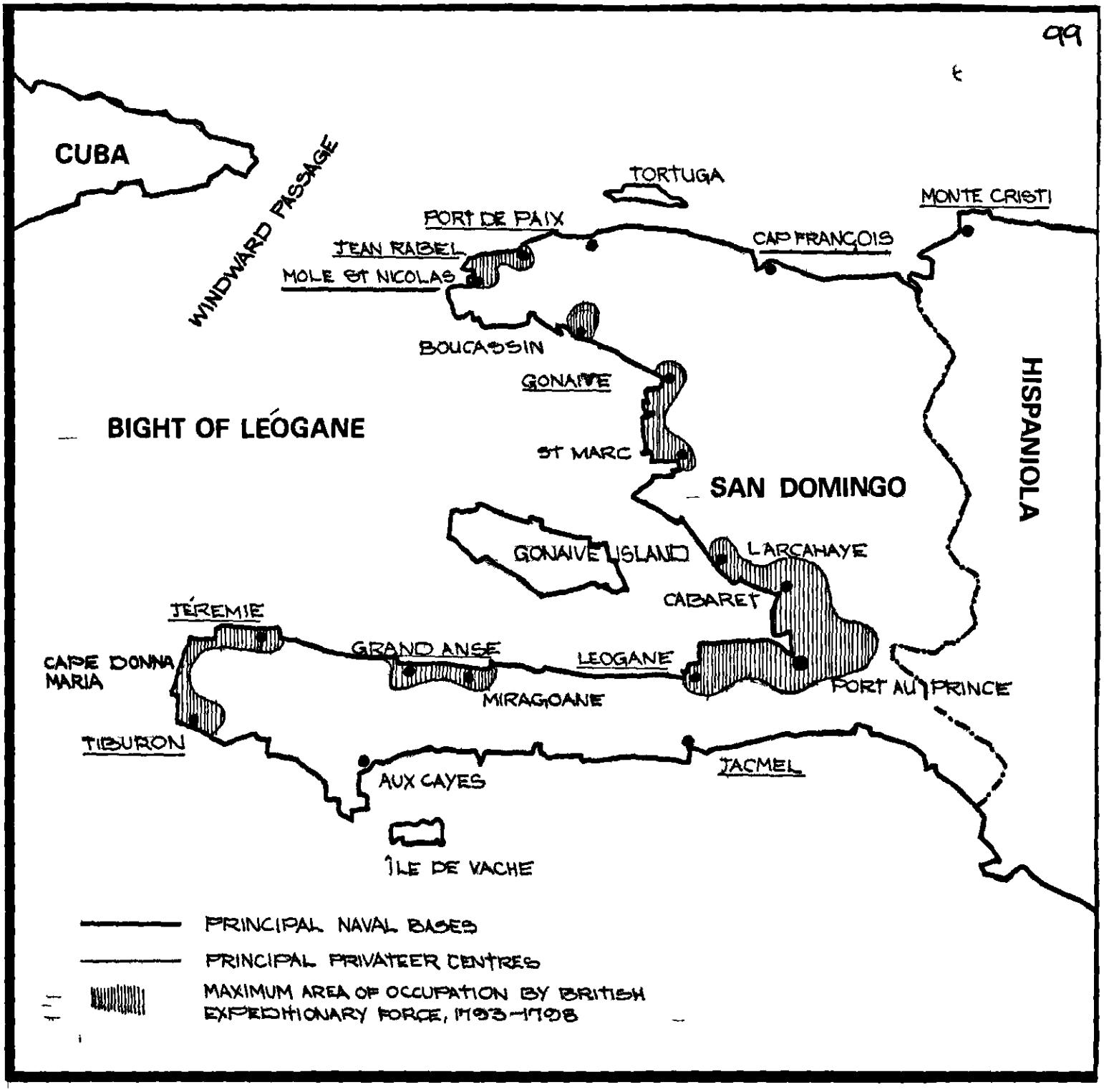
198. WO 6/5: Dundas to Major-General Forbes (military commander, San Domingo), November 13, 1795.



MAP 6. San Domingo.

which on its arrival cannot fail to carry everything before it by force of arms'.[199] Dundas envisaged an expeditionary force of 10,000 men for which he set three principal strategic objectives on arrival in San Domingo. These were: the capture of the key enemy bases of Cap François and Port de Paix; the conquest of the entire Northern Province; and the occupation of the island of Tortuga off the north coast. Quite apart from the problem of finding the troops, the whole plan was grossly over-ambitious. It showed little understanding of the true situation - the terrain, the yellow fever, the rising power of the negro rebels, the sheer size of San Domingo. In particular the scheme to seize Tortuga was bad strategy. The island was swampy and unhealthy and any operation there would inevitably have deflected military and naval effort away from the mainland campaign. Parker himself stood to gain most by its occupation, since Tortuga was a favourite haunt of privateers and would have been a useful anchorage for the squadron as an alternative to the Mole. Yet he was the first to condemn the folly of such an adventure.[200]

In fact the promised reinforcements never reached San Domingo on the scale intended. As part of the ill-fated

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199. WO 6/5: Dundas to General Forbes, September 30, 1795. The despatch is marked: 'most secret'.

200. ADM 1/246: Parker to Nepean, December 9, 1795; WO 6/5: General Forbes to Dundas, November 30, 1795. At first Forbes strongly favoured the Tortuga plan, but was finally persuaded of its folly by Parker.

Abercrombhy-Christian expedition[201] assembling in England in the autumn of 1795, they were scheduled to be diverted to the Mole St Nicolas as soon as the combined force arrived in the Caribbean. As a result of that expedition's failure to start,[202] the San Domingo section under Major-General Whyte did not reach the Mole until May 1796, and then only with 3,500 troops instead of the 10,000 originally promised. Prior to that Forbes had only received two weak battalions, hurriedly got together at Gibraltar and shipped over in February 1796.[203] Neither Forbes nor Parker now had any illusions about the final outcome of the campaign.[204]

The year 1796 proved the turning-point in the struggle for San Domingo. The failure to adequately reinforce the British garrisons combined with other factors which now came to the fore to tip the scales decisively in the enemy's favour. These were: the rise of Toussaint l'Ouverture; an unexpected increase in French naval activity; the crippling cost of the San Domingo campaign and Spain's declaration of war in October.

Chronologically the first event of the year was an attack

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201. See chapter 6, pp. 334-5.

202. See chapter 6, pp. 336-9.

203. WO 6/6: Dundas to Forbes: three letters of January 6 and 27; February 7, 1796. The Gibraltar detachment of 1,600 troops under General Bowyer, was brought over in a convoy escorted by the frigate Ceres.

204. ADM 1/247: Parker to Nepean: February 28, 1796.

on the British garrison at Irois. At the end of February an enemy flotilla comprising the frigate La Concorde, three sloops and smaller craft sailed from Aux Cayes but the assault was beaten back. In March, Parker and Forbes countered by launching an amphibious expedition against the important port of Léogane, which had been lost the previous December.[205] Three battleships of the Jamaica squadron took part, with frigates and sloops in support.[206] Due to poor military leadership and strong enemy resistance the operation completely miscarried. Heavy fire from the enemy shore-batteries disabled the Leviathan and the Africa. At a council-of-war held on board Parker's flagship off Léogane on March 23rd, it was decided to abandon the attempt, only six days after it had begun.[207] The operation was later described by Parker's second-in-command as: ' ... a blundering and undigested expedition'.[208]

The penalty for this failure was exacted two months later, when two French squadrons broke through the weakened cruiser screen and brought reinforcements to San Domingo. On March 22nd Commodore Thomas had sailed from Brest with eight troop

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205. q.v. ante, p. 84-5.

206. Leviathan, 74; Swiftsure, 74; Africa, 64; frigates Ceres and Iphigenia.

207. ADM 1/247: Parker to Nepean, March 23, 1796 (enclosing copy of minutes of Council of War).

208. Spencer Papers (N.R.S.), vol. I, pp. 283 - 284: Commodore Duckworth to Captain Barker of the Leviathan, June 1, 1796.

transports escorted by two frigates and a corvette.[209] A few days later Rear-Admiral Thévenard left Rochefort with two ships-of-the-line, a frigate and a corvette, en route for the same destination.[210] Both arrived at Cap François between May 6th and 9th. When one of Parker's cruisers shortly afterwards reconnoitred the harbour, it was found to be crowded with enemy shipping.[211]

Although Parker sailed at once from Port Royal with the main squadron to blockade Cap François, the damage had already been done. Nearly 10,000 French troops commanded by the able General Rochambeau had reached San Domingo unscathed. Severely criticised by the Admiralty for failing to intercept the enemy, Parker tried to shift the blame on to the senior officer of the San Domingo cruiser patrol. He maintained that Captain Lewis of the Hannibal had, without orders, sent two of his cruisers back to the Mole just before the enemy's arrival. Be that as it may, the real causes of the disaster were exactly those which enabled the French to reinforce Guadeloupe twice between 1794 and 1796.[212]

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209. Méduse, 40; Insurgente, 36; Douceuse, 18. Five of the transports were armed 'en flûte' including La Chine and La Fine, with 30-guns apiece.

210. Fougeux, 74; Wattigny, 74; Vengeance, 40; Berceau, 20.

211. ADM 1/247: Captain Tripp of the Sampson to Parker, May 15, 1796.

212. See Chapter 1, pp. 34 and 42-3.

Lack of frigates and sloops; the vast area to be patrolled; the squadron's over-commitment elsewhere - all allowed the enemy to use the element of surprise at will.

Even before the disaster, Parker had begun to show signs of deterioration under the strain of command. In June he contracted yellow fever and the command was temporarily transferred to his deputy, Commodore Duckworth, while he convalesced ashore at Jamaica.[213] But on July 22nd Parker completely broke down and his request to relinquish the command was accepted by the Admiralty. Notwithstanding a future career of distinction, Duckworth in 1796 had no experience of senior command.[214] Force of circumstances now placed him in charge of the Jamaica station for five critical months, while Parker's successor was being chosen in London. Duckworth was understandably cautious, at a time when vigorous action was urgently needed if the situation were to be retrieved.[215] Nevertheless, it was not only lack of leadership but the state of the squadron which was the stumbling-block.

Although with 11 ships-of-the-line and 7 frigates,[216] the squadron was stronger than at any time earlier in the war, the

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213. ADM 1/247: William Parker, at sea en route to Jamaica, to Nepean, July 1, 1796.

214. Biographical details in: D.N.B. vi, 92 - 96; Naval Chronicle xviii, 1 et seq; Ralfe ii, 283 et seq.

215. Spencer Papers (N.R.S.), vol. I, pp. 285 - 288: Duckworth to Spencer, July 24 and 25, 1796. these despatches clearly display Duckworth's uneasiness and lack of confidence in command.

216. ADM 1/247: Duckworth to Nepean, July 30, 1796, includes a full list of the Jamaica squadron.

state of the ships and their crews was alarming. Yellow fever had worked havoc aboard; on the Dictator, 74, alone, the crew was three hundred below complement. The worst feature was the condition of the ships themselves, caused by months of unrelieved service and inadequate repair facilities in the local dockyards. Examples are not hard to find. Parker's flagship the Raisonable, leaked so badly that constant hand-pumping was necessary. Her mast and gun-breechings were rotten and both capstan-spindles broken off short.[217] The Argonaut was falling to pieces and in the harbour at Port Royal the Alfred had lain dismasted for months.[218] The casualty list was increased by a collision between the Sampson and the Hannibal, and the wreck of the Undaunted off the Morant Keys on August 31st. By September Duckworth found the squadron reduced to five serviceable ships-of-the-line, all severely undermanned.[219]

Some relief however was at hand. On November 12th Vice-Admiral Sir Hyde Parker[220] arrived at the Mole and took over command of the Jamaica station from Duckworth. He brought with him no less than seven ships-of-the-line, detached from the Mediterranean Fleet. The cause of this sudden increase of force at Jamaica was news which reached the Admiralty at the

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217, 218. Spencer Papers (N.R.S.), vol. I, pp. 285 - 288: Duckworth to Spencer, July 24 and 25; August 1, 1796.

219. ADM 1/247: Duckworth to Nepean, September 9, 1796.

220. Biographical details in: D.N.B. xv, 244 - 245; Charnock vi 523; Ralfe i, 377 et seq.

beginning of September. A powerful French squadron under Admiral Richery had sailed from Cadiz, bound, it was believed, for the Caribbean. A second enemy force - a Spanish squadron under Rear-Admiral Solano - was also at sea and thought to be set on the same course. To meet the threat, Hyde Parker was ordered to the West Indies with all speed.

Although the Richery sortie never reached the Caribbean,[221] Hyde Parker's arrival in force at the Mole brought new vigour to a station which had sunk to a very low ebb. Both he and his deputy, Rear-Admiral Bligh, quickly discovered that the administration of the squadron was in chaos. Arrangements regarding victualling, naval stores and care of sick and wounded had become scandalously neglected. Bligh immediately complained he was unable to send cruisers to patrol off Cap François due to gross negligence by the local victualling contractors.[222] The supply of bread, fruit and vegetables to the squadron was so disorganized that Hyde Parker demanded the immediate appointment of a properly-constituted agent victualler for the station.[223] When this was done, the victualling system gradually improved but there were other administrative problems. In March 1797, Hyde Parker complained that existing medical facili-

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221. See chapter 1, pp. 57 and 59.

222. ADM 1/247: Bligh to Hyde Parker, January 30th, 1797.

223. ADM 1/247: Hyde Parker to Nepean, February 2, 1797.

ties, both afloat and ashore, were quite inadequate to meet the mounting yellow fever casualties. He called for more ship's surgeons, the services of local doctors and the establishment of a seamen's hospital at Presqu'ile, Martinique.[224]

Shortage of masts, sails, rigging and other tackle was a perennial problem. Although the storeship Grampus arrived at Port Royal in October 1797 with a few sails, many more were needed especially for the 74's. It was apparently difficult to have large sails made at the Port Royal yard, owing to insufficient sailmakers on the establishment and all being engaged in current repairs.[225] Not until the end of the year did the long-awaited mast-ship Trelawney arrive at the Mole from Halifax, Nova Scotia.[226]

Despite the administrative difficulties, the naval strategic situation had greatly improved by 1797. For the first time since the beginning of the war the Jamaica squadron had reached respectable strength. Moreover after the Richery episode the French made no further attempts to send cruising squadrons to the West Indies and thereafter her navy was represented in the area by only a few frigates operating from Cap François. The

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224. ADM 1/247: Hyde Parker to Nepean, April 18, 1797,

225. ADM 1/248: Hyde Parker to Nepean, October 6, 1797.

226. ADM 1/248: Hyde Parker to Nepean, January 1, 1798.

References to such parts of the Plan as are washed with a blackish teint, being the Buildings proposed to remain. Viz.t

A. Commander in Chiefs house. N.o V. Store house, proposed to be converted into a Cockroom and Store room for his use.
B. Master Shipwrights house.
C. His Office.
D. His Cockroom and Store room.
E. Saw Pit and Slip, the House that covered the Pit is blown down.
F. Smiths Shop.
G. Inclosure for Coals.
H. Platform with Pit and Capstans for heaving down Ships, made in the Year 1773.
I. New Capstan house and Sail loft erected in 1773.
K. Pursers Store room.
L. Armourers Shop for cleaning the Ships Arms.
M. House for the Careening Gare.
N. Store house occupied by the Ordnance Storekeeper.
O. Chimney and boilers.

References to such parts of the Plan, as are expressed by dotted lines, being the sites of the Buildings destroyed by the Hurricane 31st August 1772

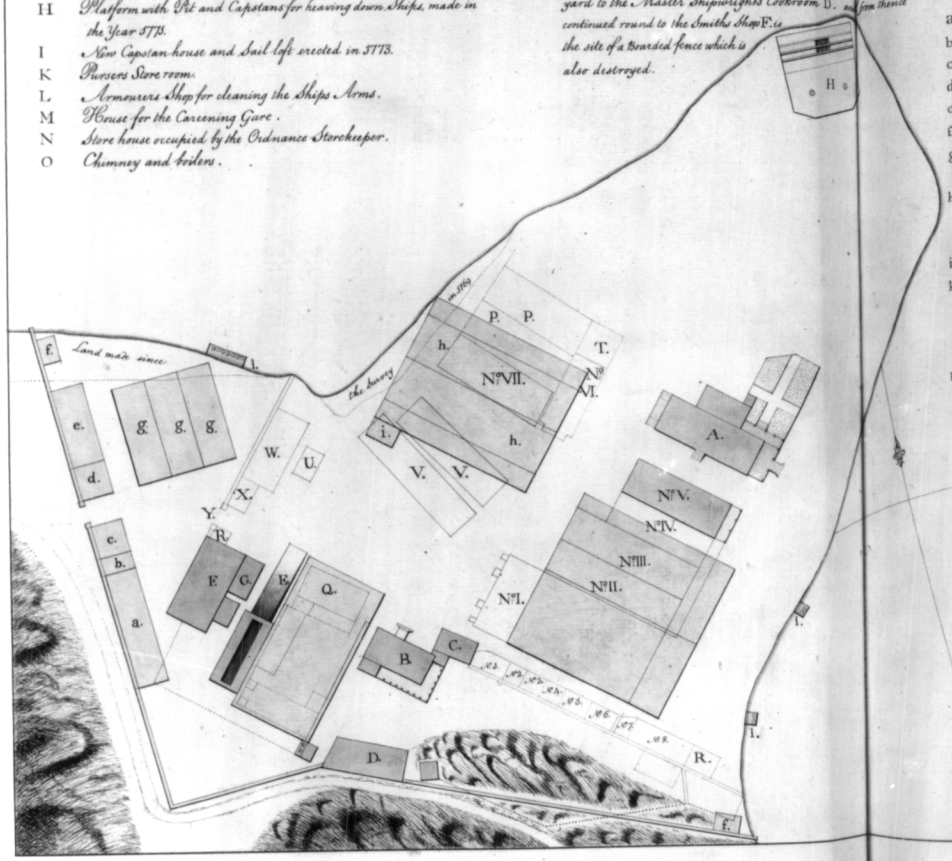
P.P. Boat Houses.
Q. Naval Officers house and Offices.
N.o IV. Store house.
N.o VII & Shed Store rooms.
RRR. Watchmens Cabbins.
S Old Capstan house and Sail loft.
The dotted line T.egraged up the hill, from the South corner of the yard to the Master Shipwrights Cockroom D. and from thence continued round to the Smiths Shop E. is the site of a Boarded fence which is also destroyed.

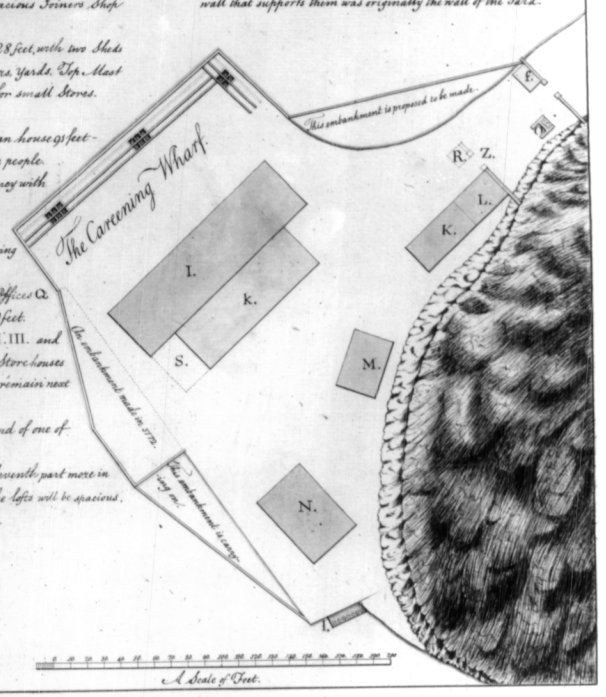
Explanations & References to the proposed enlargements and improvements distinguished by a teint of red.

To inclose the Yard with a wall from the water side on the South to D. from thence Westward about 92 feet, and return Northward to the water side, leaving a Road and a Ditch towards the hill to carry the water off from the Valley in heavy Rains. On this piece of ground (without the present Gate) much boat work and other repairs are often done.
To Erect New buildings of Stone or Brick next the Wall on the inside Viz.t
a. Store house for Nails, Iron &c.
b. A Prison for the securing of Delinquents.
c. Guard Room } each side the Gate way.
d. Porters lodge }
e. Provision Store.
fff. Shed Watch houses built with Pine quarter and Boarded.
ggg. Boat houses each 60 feet by 20 feet, with a spacious Joiners Shop over them.
hh. Two working Mast houses each 300 feet by 28 feet, with two Sheds each 300 feet by 12, to shelter Pumps, out Riggers yards, Top Mast Spars &c.a with Lofts over the Mast houses for small Stores.
i. The Engine house removed from U.
k. Rigging house on the site of the Old Capstan house 91 feet by 30, with a loft to lay up Sails & shelter the people.
To inclose the Careening Wharf and Chimney with a Wall, gate and Watch house, as at f.
llll. Necessaries
If the Stores remain in the Yard the following situations are proposed, Viz.t
On the Site of the Naval Officers house & Offices Q. to erect a Brick Store house 300 feet by 50 feet.
On the situation of the Store houses N.o I. II. III. and part of N.o VI. to erect two other contiguous Store houses each 300 feet by 50 feet, a passage of 12 feet will remain next to N.o I.
The Naval Officers Office, may be at one end of one of the lofts.
These new Store houses will contain full one Seventh part more in area than those proposed to be taken down. The lofts will be spacious, and contain a large quantity of small stores.

References to such parts of the Plan as are expressed by plain lines, being the buildings proposed to be taken down; some of these Plans are under the red teint.

T. Commander in Chiefs Cockroom } Stone buildings Old decayed
N.o II. Store house for Nails and Iron } and much damaged
N.o VII. Calle Storehouse a boarded building in a ruinous state
V.V. Working Mast houses old and damaged, and too contracted
U. Engine house to be removed to i
W. Provision Store and Joiners Shop above
X. Guard Room } Boarded buildings old & much decayed.
Y. Gate way and Porters lodge R.
Z. Gate way to the Careening Wharf
N.o I. Store house } Stone and brick buildings Old & decayed & much damaged by the late Hurricane, but since repaired in the best manner the emergency & their ruinous condition would admit for the preservation of the Stores.
N.o II. Ditto
N.o III. Ditto
N.os 3 2 3 4 5 & 6. Small Shed store rooms boarded buildings old & decayed, the wall that supports them was originally the wall of the Yard.





A Plan of His Majesty's Yard, and Careening Wharf at English Harbour in the Island of Antigua.

with Projects for enlargements and improvements.

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Spanish ships remained almost entirely inactive. One or two frigates occasionally emerged from Havana or Port Dauphin for a sortie, but the rest of the squadron rotted in harbour without sufficient crews to put to sea.

It was therefore tragic that at the moment when the naval initiative had been regained, the military forces on San Domingo suffered complete eclipse. Although the Government had become apprehensive at the halting of the army's progress, they for a long time refused to face reality. It was the appalling military casualties and crippling financial cost of the campaign which finally decided the issue. Four years' struggle had caused the deaths of 30,000 soldiers and seamen - a scale of attrition which could no longer be tolerated.

The most telling statistics came from the Treasury. Campaign costs had soared: £300,000 in 1794; £800,000 in 1795; £2,000,000 in 1796. As a result General Simcoe, who had replaced Forbes as military governor in December 1796, was curtly informed that the future costs of the campaign would be strictly limited to £300,000 a year.[227] Even so, the expenditure for January and February 1797 alone reached £700,000 before any economies could take effect.

Such stringent measures obviously affected the conduct of a campaign which was already in difficulties. Even when

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227. Dundas to Simcoe, June 7, 1797. A copy of this letter is enclosed with: ADM 1/248: Hyde Parker to Nepean, July 1, 1797.

favourable opportunities occurred, no advantage could be taken of them. In June 1797, the inhabitants of Monte Cristi, an important Spanish privateer base on the north coast of Hispanolia threw open their gates.[228] But for lack of means the chance was lost. The British Government imagined the campaign could be carried on by withdrawing the forces to key strategic areas - such as the peninsula of Mole St Nicholas - in order to reduce the financial costs.[229] Both Simcoe and Hyde Parker, however, rightly condemned the idea. They know that the strength of the Mole lay in its strategic position and not as a fortress. It had no landward defences and was vulnerable to attack from the encircling mountains. Moreover the barren and uninhabited hinterland could never support the expeditionary force.[230]

In this difficult situation, it was left to the foresight and ability of one man to extricate the army from San Domingo. In April 1797 Brigadier Sir Thomas Maitland[231] arrived at the Mole, with official orders to assess the situation. He at once realized the difficulty of continuing the campaign and recommended an early evacuation of Port-au-Prince and St Marc.[232] Dundas,

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228. Spencer Papers (N.R.S.), vol. IV,: Hyde Parker to Spencer, June 12, 1797.

229. WO 6/6: Dundas to Simcoe, November 25, 1796 (secret instructions).

230. ADM 1/248: Hyde Parker to Spencer, June 15/16 and 25/26, 1797.

231. Biographical details in: D.N.B. xii, 818 - 820, Gentleman's Magazine (1824), part i, 370 - 371.

232. WO 6/6: Maitland to Dundas, April 24, 1797.

the Secretary for War, was taken aback and at first preferred the advice of the resident commanders, Simcoe and Whyte, that they should be held. All three were guilty of misjudging the strength of the negro forces. It took time for Toussaint l'Ouverture, Rigaud and the other rebel leaders to settle their differences and combine forces. But by March 1798 Toussaint was in supreme command of a large army and openly declared his intention of driving the British forces into the sea.

As 15,000 rebels lay siege to Port-au-Prince, Maitland superseded Whyte as military commander on San Domingo. His first act was to order the withdrawal of the garrisons from Port-au-Prince, L'Arcahaye and St Marc and he asked Hyde Parker to provide naval support during the evacuation. On April 30th, 1798 a meeting took place between Toussaint l'Ouverture and Maitland on board H.M.S. Abergavenny, moored off Port-au-Prince. The outcome was an agreement by which the British garrisons were allowed to withdraw under a five-week flag of truce prior to the occupation of the three towns by the rebel forces.[233] Toussaint honoured the treaty and the troops were taken off by ships of the Jamaica squadron between May 6th and 9th without incident.

Hyde Parker had watched developments with ill-concealed

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233. (ADM 1/248: Hyde Parker to Nepean, April 30, 1798.
(Bryan Edwards': 'History of the West Indies', vol. III (San Domingo), pp. 422; 426-7.

disapproval. When it became apparent that Maitland intended a complete evacuation of the island should follow, bitter controversy arose between the two commanders. The crux of the matter concerned the naval base at Mole St Nicolas. As early as January 1798, Hyde Parker had warned the Admiralty that the appointment of Maitland as military governor ' ,.. will place the navy entirely at his disposal'.[234] Although he had no control over the ships of the squadron, he could take away their bases on San Domingo.

Maitland advanced three strong arguments for complete evacuation: the steadily increasing rebel forces; the yellow fever casualties and the British Government's refusal to provide any more money or troops for the campaign. The general was fully aware that such a drastic step would have serious political and naval repercussions. Before therefore making a formal request to the Government for permission to proceed, he took the precaution of finding out the views of the Governor of Jamaica and the station admiral, although privately his mind was already made up. Governor Balcarres gave a cautious reply. Disassociating himself from the consequences, he felt particularl anxious about the effect a negro triumph on San Domingo would have upon the plantation slaves in Jamaica.

Hyde Parker's reaction was extremely violent. In two

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234. Spencer Papers (N.R.S.), vol. IV: Hyde Parker to Spencer, January 30, 1798.

forceful letters to Maitland, he utterly refused to agree to an evacuation of Mole St Nicolas: ' ... I think it a naval port of too much consequence to be given up; nothing would induce me to such a measure but express and most positive orders of government.'[235] He saw quite clearly what its loss would mean to the squadron. In such a head-on collision of views, the solution could only come from elsewhere and it was the government who broke the deadlock. Early in August, Maitland received Cabinet approval for a complete evacuation. Four weeks Hyde Parker fulminated in a flurry of correspondence that neither his wishes nor those of the Navy had been consulted over the decision. But at length he gave way, not because he agreed with Maitland but in obedience to orders from England.[236]

On August 20th 1798, the garrisons were evacuated from Jérémie, Irois and Grande Anse with the assistance of the squadron. The final withdrawal from the Mole itself began on September 25th and was completed in ten days.[237] In the process friction developed between the squadron and the ground forces over the allocation of transports and the disposal of the large quantities of stores which had accumulated at the base.

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235. ADM 1/248: Hyde Parker to Maitland, June 27 and 30, 1798.

236. Spencer Papers, vol. IV: Hyde Parker to Spencer, August 10 - October 29, 1798.
ADM 1/248: Hyde Parker to Bligh, August 8, 1798.

237. Capt. Thomas Southey: 'Chronological History of the West Indies': III, pp. 317-8.

Matters were made worse by Maitland's abrupt departure for England three weeks before the evacuation. Before leaving he had negotiated a secret treaty with Toussaint l'Ouverture. Two of its clauses stipulated that many of the stores at the Mole should be transferred to the rebels for a nominal sum and that in future coastal shipping operating from San Domingan ports would not be attacked by the Jamaica squadron. Many people condemned the treaty in general and these clauses in particular, for the recognition given to the rebel cause. Hyde Parker considered it an even worse mistake than the decision to evacuate the Mole; ' ... Maitland's secret articles with the black general Toussaint, which were never made known to me ... are a disgrace to our nation.'[238] But the treaty had received full Cabinet approval and Hyde Parker's complaints fell on deaf ears.[239]

The evacuation from San Domingo in October 1798, after a five-year struggle for possession, marks the end of a chapter for British strategy in the Caribbean. Thereafter events on the station were in a minor key. The Spanish warships remained almost entirely inactive. On the one occasion they did bestir themselves, they were decisively repulsed. At the end of 1798 a flotilla of twenty Spanish schooners and sloops launched an

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238. ADM 1/248: Hyde Parker to Spencer, November 17, 1798.

239. Spencer Papers, vol. IV: Spencer to Hyde Parker, December 2, 1798.

attack against the logwood settlements on the Honduras coast but were routed in three sharp engagements off Montego and St George's Cays.[240] Enemy privateers continued to be troublesome but by the end of the year, the last three French frigates[241] had sailed from Cap François before that important base fell into the hands of the negro rebels.[242]

The struggle for possession of San Domingo dominated events on the Jamaica station during the period. Ever since the decision to intervene there at the end of 1793, almost the entire resources of the squadron had been devoted to its cause. As a result the station admirals' other responsibilites - the defence of Jamaica and other colonies, the protection of seaborne trade - were frequently neglected. It was indeed fortunate that the French lacked the warships and the Spaniards were too indolent to take advantage of the situation.

In retrospect it is clear why the campaign in San Domingo ultimately failed. The belief that the whole colony could be occupied with the limited troops available; ignorance of the terrain and the strength of the rebel forces - all played their part. Once the campaign had begun, the obstinate determination to possess the economically rich colony at all costs blinded

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240. ADM 1/248: Hyde Parker to Nepean, November 6, 1798.

241. La Sirène; La Bravoure; Le Cockade National.

242. ADM 1/248: Hyde Parker to Nepean, November 1, 1798.

the government to the frightful cost in lives and money. The outlook for the campaign became so serious in 1798 that Maitland's decision to evacuate was made just in time to prevent complete disaster. And in such a situation Maitland acted entirely correctly.

Yet there was another type of strategy which might and should have been pursued in San Domingo, and one which Hyde Parker tried to put into words in 1798, four years too late. This concept recognized the maritime importance of San Domingo: the dominance of the Windward Passage by Mole St Nicholas; the colony's proximity to Jamaica and the Bahamas; the value of its long indented coastline and many small harbours to enemy privateers. From the strategic point of view therefore only the Mole and the main coastal ports should have been occupied in 1794; under no circumstances should a large-scale military campaign have been attempted. Once occupied, the ports and bases could have been heavily fortified and garrisoned and made impregnable to enemy attack by land or sea. It is no accident that Mole St Nicolas is frequently referred to as the 'Gibraltar of the Caribbean'; so it might have been in British possession. Seapower is the dominant element in Caribbean strategy. If it had been given full rein in San Domingo, the outcome of the campaign might well have been different. As it was, other considerations - economic, politic and military - blotted out the naval, and produced the disastrous results which followed.

CHAPTER 3

THE CONVOY SYSTEM AND THE WEST INDIA INTEREST

The organization of convoys to and from the West Indies and the protection of the merchant ships while on passage lay in the hands of the Admiralty and the escort commanders. But others were as closely concerned in the success of the convoy system - the marine underwriters and the whole West India interest, merchants, planters and shipowners.

During the first half of the eighteenth century, marine insurance was in its infancy. Partly through inexperience, partly through the need to obtain business, underwriters gave generous cover at low premiums despite the considerable risks involved. At that time there was no compulsion for ships to take convoy and the system lacked organization and discipline. Nevertheless, many owners had little cause to regret the capture of their vessels, as often happened, since they were generally over-insured.[243] Moreover, the underwriters suffered as a result of their efforts to encourage shipowners to take convoy. They charged differential premiums in favour of those who did, based on the warranty clause of the policy stating that the ship had departed in convoy. But in practice many vessels broke away from the convoy en route - exasperated at its slow progress or determined to reach the market with their cargoes

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243. Richard Pares: 'War and Trade in the West Indies (1739 - 1763)', p. 303.

before the rest. Such abuse of the warranty clause became so widespread that in 1746 the underwriters took action. Henceforth the usual part-refundment of the premium was only made in the case of ships which could be proved to have been in convoy throughout the voyage.[244] Moreover, from an insurance point of view, taking convoy became more precisely defined: sailing with a regular convoy to a predetermined destination, under a Government-appointed officer and in obedience to his instructions and signals.

Although at first hostile to the development of marine insurance, the attitude of the Admiralty changed after Lloyds rise to predominance in the 1770s. By 1793 Lloyds had become the greatest centre of marine insurance in the world,[245] and the Admiralty recognized its importance in the organization of convoys. On the outbreak of war the Admiralty began supplying 'correct lists of all convoys'[246] to the Lloyds Committee, who in return made available their records and reports. The unique intelligence system of shipping movements which Lloyds had built up throughout the world proved of great strategic value. These and notices of marine casualties were published twice weekly in the 'Lloyds List'. Moreover, it

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244. Richard Pares: 'War and Trade in the West Indies (1739 - 1763)', p. 303, and: Lilian Penson: 'The Colonial Agents of the British West Indies', pp. 300 - 301).

245. For details see: Wright & Fayle: 'History of Lloyds' (London; 1928).

246. A.D.M. 1/5179: Orders in Council: April 18, 1793.

became established practice during the war for the Admiralty and even station commanders overseas to consult Lloyds Committee on convoy regulations, ports of assembly and trade defence.[247, 248]

Lloyds were equally concerned with the convoy system on their own behalf, for it formed the basis of their quotations of differential premium rates. Normally the premium was charged as a percentage of the value of the vessel or cargo, according to whether it sailed with or without convoy. But Lloyds underwriters generally preferred to use the 'returns' system - a deposit of between a third and a half of the value of the vessel or cargo - because it gave them an advantage in respect of ships which were captured after parting company from a convoy.[249] In January 1795, a leading Lloyds underwriter, John Julius Angerstein, gave the First Lord of the Admiralty detailed scales of premium insurance from London to the West Indies, as they had developed over the previous fifteen years:-

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247. C.E. Fayle: chapter on 'Shipowning and Marine Insurance', in 'Trade Winds ... ' (edited by C.N. Parkinson), pp. 25 - 48.

248. ADM 1/3992: Letters from Lloyds to the Admiralty (1793 - 1804) and Lloyds' Proceedings: June 11, 1794.

249. C.E. Fayle ... (as 247), p. 29.

SCALES OF PREMIUM INSURANCE

1. LONDON to JAMAICA	
Year	Premium
1779	7 - 8 guineas with convoy; 15 - 20 guineas without
1782	8-10-15 guineas with convoy
1792	£2½ with convoy
1793: January	3 guineas }
: February	5-7 guineas } without convoy
: April	8 guineas }

2. LONDON to the LEEWARD ISLANDS	
1779	7-8 guineas with convoy; 16 guineas without
1782	8-12 guineas with convoy
1792	£2 with convoy
1793: January	2½-3 guineas }
: February	10 guineas } with convoy
: March	5 guineas }

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By 1793 the West India interest was firmly established in London, proof of the growing importance of Caribbean trade, especially sugar, to the British economy. The development

250. Chatham Papers: PRO 30/8 - vol. 365, part i: Angerstein to Chatham, January 10th, 1795.

of its representation in England had been a slow process, however, and until 1760 no permanent organization existed.[251] That year the Society of West India Merchants was founded in London. It had at first no premises of its own and used to meet every month in the offices of the Marine Society in Leadenhall Street. Membership was confined to London merchants trading with the West Indies, who were charged a fund on trade in order to keep the society in being. About the same time another society was formed by Caribbean planters and colonial agents resident in England. By 1785 a joint permanent Committee of West India Merchants and Planters had emerged, although the Society of West India Merchants continued to function. Both societies pursued the same objectives: the prosperity of the plantations, protection of the colonies' trade and opposition to negro emancipation.[252]

After 1793, the standing committee of the West India Merchants and Planters became the vehicle whereby frequent petitions were sent to the Admiralty concerning the appointment of convoys and protection of trade on the Caribbean stations. These petitions could not be ignored by the Government. The committee's members included several of great influence, such as the two Beeston Longs, John Julius Angerstein, Alexander

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251. Lilian M. Penson: 'The London West India interest in the eighteenth century'. (E.H.R., vol. xxvi, (1921), pp. 373 - 392)

252. Ibid: pp. 378 - 383.

Baring and Lord Penrhyn.[253] They and others made themselves heard, not only through the committee, but in the House of Commons, where a strong West India faction had developed. Furthermore following London's example, West India associations sprang up in the other British ports engaged in the Caribbean trade. The Bristol West India Society was established in 1782, the Glasgow West India Association in 1802, and the Liverpool West India Association in 1803.[254]

In London there was an important difference of function between the standing committee of the West India Merchants and Planters and the Society of West India Merchants. Whereas the former was mainly concerned with sending petitions to the Government, it was with the latter that the Admiralty corresponded over the appointment of convoys. And it was to the local West India associations in Bristol, Glasgow and Liverpool that the Admiralty similarly wrote, regarding the assembly of the trade from those ports. It is a significant comment upon the importance of these associations that, shortly after they were founded, the Admiralty was dealing exclusively

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253. The two Beeston Longs were successively chairmen of the West India Committee. John Julius Angerstein, merchant, philanthropist and patron of art, was one of the leading figures in the early history of Lloyd's. Alexander Baring was an eminent banker, whose father had founded the financial house of Baring Brothers.
For further biographical details, see D.N.B. vol. I, pp. 416-7 and 1110-12.

254. Lilian M. Penson: 'The London West India interest ... ', p. 382.

with them and refused to accept applications for convoy from individual merchants.[255]

The task of organizing the outward-bound convoys from Britain to the Caribbean was shared between the Admiralty and the West India associations. The trade was divided into two portions: the London and East Coast trade assembling at Portsmouth as the convoy rendezvous, the Irish and western trade at Cork. In the former case, the Secretary of the Admiralty corresponded with the London West India Committee; in the latter with the outport associations at Bristol, Liverpoc and Glasgow.[256] Requests for convoy in both cases originated from the West India merchants and it was for the Admiralty to devise the sailing schedules and provide the warship escort in the light of their other commitments.

The minutes of meetings kept by the Society of West India Merchants in London contain many examples of how the application for convoy was made.[257] Their request to the Admiralty

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255. These and later references (indicated WIM or WIMP hereafter) cite two manuscript collections preserved in the West India Committee Library, Norfolk Street, London, W.C. 2.
i. Minutes of the Meetings of the West India Merchants (1st series): vol. IV - March 1794 to December 1802. (vol. III is lost)
ii. Minutes of Meetings of the West India Planters and Merchants (2nd series); vol. II - February 1793 to April 1801

256. Lilian M. Penson: op. cit. p. 388.

257, 258. Examples occur in the WIM committee minutes for the meetings of: March 28, 1794; September 16, 1794; November 25, 1794; April 28, 1795; November 27, 1798.

followed a stereotyped pattern: ' ... that the Chairman be directed to make application to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, that a convoy may be appointed and ready to sail on ------ next, on the first fair wind subsequent thereto, waiting twenty-four hours for the ships in the Downs ...'.[258]

The applications from the outports were less uniform. Although many followed the pattern of the London committee, in some cases petitions were addressed direct to the Admiralty by local groups of merchants and shipowners. For instance in October 1794, the merchants of Lancaster requested convoy from Cork to the West Indies, to sail in the middle of November.[259] Their vessels had missed the Liverpool rendezvous and there was too little time for them to reach Cork before the regular convoy set sail for the Caribbean. In such circumstances the Admiralty went out of its way to help. If the Lancaster merchants could get their ship to Cork not later than November 9th, it agreed to provide a warship to escort them to the convoy rendezvous at Spithead.[260] A similar case occurred in January 1794, when a group of Bristol merchants were given escort for twenty of their vessels which had missed the last convoy.[261]

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258. See previous page 257, 258.

259, 260. ADM 7/60: Convoys and Cruizers, 1794 - 1797. Applications for Convoy: Mr. Dent (for the merchants of Lancaster) to the Admiralty, October 16, 1794; and the reply, October 31.

261. ADM 7/60: Convoys and Cruizers ... January 1, 1794.

These however were exceptions to the general rule. Normally the Admiralty only granted applications for convoy from the established West India associations in the four major ports.

Although the first steps in assembling the outward-bound convoys were straightforward enough, many problems had to be solved before they could sail. The most difficult concerned their frequency and size, over which the interests of the West India merchants and the Admiralty were often at variance.

From the merchants' point of view, the frequent dispatch of small convoys from Portsmouth and Cork - preferably at the rate of one every month - was the ideal arrangement. Not being self-supporting economically, the Caribbean colonies were greatly dependent on the import of foodstuffs from Britain (and North America). The bulk shipment of Irish beef, pork and dairy produce from Cork and the neighbouring ports was particularly important. Highly perishable in the tropics these cargoes had to be shipped at frequent intervals. Moreover the West Indian planters entirely relied upon the convoys for the regular supply of plantation stores, casks and equipment, without which they would have failed. For them it was essential that several convoys left Britain early in the year, to ensure the maximum number of ships being in the West Indies for turn-around at the height of the sugar cane harvest. April was recognized as the latest month for the departure of outward-bound convoys, if they were to unload their cargoes

and clear for the voyage home before the hurricane season began.[262]

In almost every respect these conditions did not suit the Admiralty. The chronic shortage of frigates and sloops in the Royal Navy made it impossible to provide escorts for frequent small convoys. The situation was on one occasion aptly summarized by Vice-Admiral Jervis: ' ... we cannot afford convoy for driblets.'[263] Because of the difficulty over warships for escort duty, the Admiralty was reluctant to authorize a fixed number of convoys per annum sailing from Portsmouth and Cork. For the same reason it refused to accept a number of long-term arrangements for convoys which were proposed by the West India Committee. Nevertheless there is sufficient evidence to show that the Admiralty did as much as possible with the resources available.[264] Gradually the annual number of convoys to the West Indies rose as the war progressed. The average for the first three years of the war was five from Portsmouth and five from Cork; by 1809 the frequency was eight from each port.[265]

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262. It was not until later in the war that autumn convoys from the West Indies were appointed. See p. 148.

263. St Vincent Papers (N.R.S.): vol. II, p. 331.

264. See WIM: minutes of proceedings of September 16, 1794; November 25, 1794 and November 24, 1795.

265. The figures exclude convoys composed of troop transports, victualling and ordnance ships, and fleet trains.

A second problem concerned the size of the convoys. For two reasons they were invariably large during the period. The volume of trade to the Caribbean had grown dramatically; moreover, if the West India merchants and shipowners could not have the frequent small convoys they required, it was inevitable that those which were appointed should be large. Over 200 merchantmen in one convoy was not uncommon and the number was rarely less than 150. With the few warships he had, the escort commander needed all his skill to be able to control such numbers even in fine weather. The task of assembly at the rendezvous and getting the convoy under way was inevitably a slow and laborious business.

Assuming that all the difficulties mentioned have been resolved, a typical outward-bound convoy is assembled in St Helens roads off Portsmouth, awaiting a favourable wind. When the escort commander opened his sealed orders from the Admiralty, he read the following: '... Taking under your convoy, all such store-ships, victuallers and trade as may be at Portsmouth or Spithead bound for the West Indies, you shall put to sea and proceed to Falmouth and whence to Cork and take under convoy anything there ... call at Madeira to take on wine ... then proceed to the West Indies and having seen into Carlisle Bay (Barbados) the trade for the Leeward Islands, go on with the remainder to Jamaica.'[266] So instructed, the

266. ADM 2/1097: Secret Orders & Convoys - May 1793 to April 179 Admiralty to Captain F. Roberts of H.M.S. Success, at Spithead, March 17, 1794.

escort commander then had to transmit the orders to the convoy in his charge.

Normally this was done in the form of a printed document entitled: "Signals and Instructions for ships under convoy."[267] One copy was sent to the master of every merchant ship in the convoy, after being signed and dated by the escort commander. The document contained a mass of detailed instructions and one of its main purposes was to ensure that none of the ship-masters afterwards complained they had been unaware of convoy procedure.

Much space was devoted to an explanation of the different types of signals, which the escort might make to the convoy either in harbour or at sea. One set comprised distinguishing signals, whereby the identity of the escort warship was clearly established for the members of the convoy. These were very necessary in a crowded anchorage like Spithead where several convoys might be assembling simultaneously. The recognition signal hoisted by the escort differed according to the destination of the convoy. In one copy of the "Signals and Instructions ... " for instance, the distinguishing flag was a union jack for the West Indies, white for the Mediterranean,

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267. Numerous copies of these instructions survive, especially for the period after 1802. Their first appearance in standard printed form is difficult to date with certainty, but they were definitely in use during the American War of Independence. The copies cited hereafter are held in the National Maritime Museum Library.

blue pierced with white for Africa, yellow, red and yellow for the East Indies, and so on.[268]

Similarly detailed signals applied to the convoy at sea. When, for example, the escort hoisted a blue, white and blue flag, with a red flag below, at the foretop mast, the instruction to the convoy was: 'make all sail possible to windward'. The same signal flown from the maintopmast meant: 'put into port', and at the Mizen: 'Anchor'. Such procedure was all in the day's work to warships of the Royal Navy, but the lumbering merchantmen often became confused by the commander's signals. Signal instructions were not confined to flags flown by the escort. In foggy weather and during the hours of darkness, prearranged systems of gun and light signals were used. Moreover, the masters of the merchantmen were ordered ' ... to supply themselves with a quantity of false fire to give the alarm on the approach of an enemy's cruizer in the night.' In addition to signals procedure, the printed instructions told shipmasters what to do in the event of their vessels being captured by the enemy. Finally, most copies of the "Signals and Instructions" contained additional orders, written in the escort commander's own hand, which specifically related to the voyage about to be undertaken.[269]

268, 269. "Signals & Instructions for ships under convoy". Printed document of 14 pages, as issued to Mr. Metcalf, master of the merchant ship Countess Harcourt, by Captain George Price of H.M.S. Hotspur, April 4, 1802. Copy in Nat. Mar. Mus. Library.

Having set sail from Portsmouth, the convoy followed a well-defined route to the West Indies. The course was dictated primarily by wind and current but also by calls en route and the difficulty of ascertaining longitude at sea.[270] Down Channel the convoy might sail in company with others, bound for the Mediterranean or the Cape, in which case the escort would temporarily be strengthened by units of the Channel squadron. It was customary for the Portsmouth convoy to put in at Falmouth, the headquarters of the Post Office mail packets. There the latest despatches for the West Indies were collected, as well as stragglers who had missed the last convoy from Cork. Once clear of the soundings, course was steered south-west into the Atlantic. At least one convoy per season called at Funchal (Madeira) to take on wine, a valuable commodity in the West Indies. The north-east trade wind was then picked up anywhere between Madeira and the 27° N. parallel of latitude and followed across the Atlantic. Throughout the oceanic passage the escort was fully engaged in signalling the convoy to keep station and close round the commodore during the night, chasing the laggards and coming to the assistance of those in distress. Each day the number of ships in sight were counted

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270. The problem is well summarized by G.W. Nockolds in two articles entitled: 'Early Timekeepers at sea' and published by the Antiquarian Horological Society in its Proceedings, vol. IV, No. 4, (September, 1963) pp. 110 - 113; and vol. V, No. 5, (December 1963), pp. 148 - 152.

to see that none of the convoy was missing.[271, 272]

In the approximate position of 15° N., 50° W., a section of the convoy parted company from the main body. This was the Guiana trade bound for Berbice, Essequibo and Demerara. As it usually comprised only a few ships, the last part of the voyage was undertaken with the weak escort of only one sloop or sometimes alone. The risk of meeting enemy privateers off the Guiana coast was considerable but two reasons prevented more satisfactory arrangements being made. It was normally impossible for the Guiana ships to accompany the main convoy to Barbados and then proceed on to their destination because of strong currents, adverse winds and the delay involved. Equally it was impracticable for the whole convoy to be diverted to the Guiana coast, when its most numerous and valuable portion was anxious to reach Jamaica and the Leeward Islands without delay.

Once the Guiana trade had been detached, the rest of the convoy proceeded on to Barbados and dropped anchor in Carlisle Bay. Normally the passage from England to Barbados took six to seven weeks but very much longer in bad weather. As the

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271, 272. For typical contemporary accounts of an outward-bound convoy, see:
Nat. Mar. Mus.: Lieutenants Logs:-
1. Adm L/R: 28-18 - Log of the Raisonable, February 15 to March 30, 1795.
2. Adm L/S: 583 - Log of the Swan, June to July, 1796.

first landfall for the incoming convoys, Carlisle Bay was often crowded with shipping. But it was in many ways an unsuitable anchorage, being an open roadstead on the exposed windward side of the island. Moreover the Jamaica merchants always resented the time lost by their vessels having to call first at Carlisle Bay. In spite of their protests the Admiralty refused to consider direct convoys to Jamaica on the ground of lack of escort warships. Thus both the Jamaica and the Antilles trade were escorted in the same outward-bound convoy and upon arrival in the Caribbean distributed to the various islands according to an unvarying pattern.[273]

From Barbados, the trade bound for the other Windward Islands made the short passage to St Lucia, St Vincent and Grenada independently. The rest, and greater part, of the convoy then sailed under escort from Barbados, steering north-west through one of three passages between Dominica and St Vincent.[274] Once through, the Leeward Islands trade was detached and proceeded north to English Harbour, Antigua. Here the ships made their own way to the individual islands - St. Christopher, Nevis, Montserrat and, occasionally, Barbuda.

After this detachment the remainder of the convoy, now with reduced escort, steered west-north-west across the Carib-

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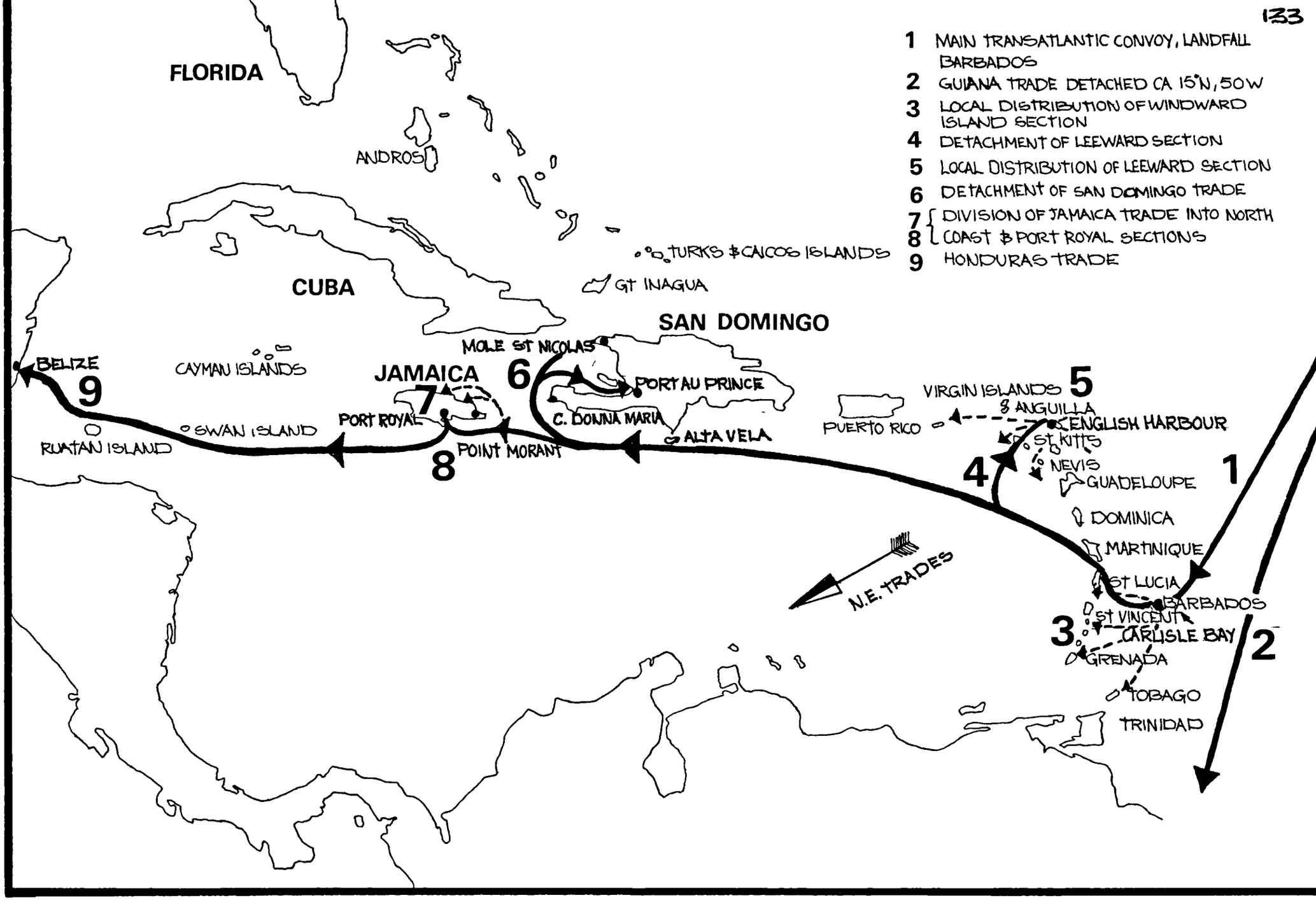
273. Lucy F. Horsfall: 'The West Indies Trade', Chapter , in 'Trade Winds'. (Edited by C.N. Parkinson; London; 1948)

274. See Map 7, p. 133.



MAP 7. Route of the Outward-bound Convoys and their Distribution in the Caribbean

bean Sea to Jamaica. Course was shaped for Alta Vela, a rocky island off the south coast of San Domingo and from thence to Point Morant, the most easterly headland of Jamaica. The passage from Carlisle Bay to Point Morant normally took between five and six days. Before the convoy sighted Jamaica, the San Domingo trade was detached off Cape Donna Maria to make its way to Port-au-Prince and Mole St Nicolas. The bulk of the Jamaica trade then followed the south coast of the island under escort into Port Royal, while the less numerous and important north coast trade was left to proceed independently to its destination. Throughout the voyage to Port Royal, the Honduras trade remained attached to the Jamaica section of the convoy. There it frequently had to wait many days until a suitable escort could be found for the final stage of the voyage. One sloop normally performed this duty, taking the trade via Swan and Ruatan Islands into Honduras Bay.[275,276]

The convoy route which has been described calls for comment. In the first place it was a well-trodden path which had been followed for decades. Due to wind and current and the need to fit the complicated convoy arrangements into a routine pattern, little alteration of route was possible. This brought certain advantages. Cruiser patrols could be concentrated at points of danger; the intricacies of the

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275, 276. op. cit.: Lucy F. Horsfall ... pp. 186-8.

passage became familiar after years of experience. On the other hand, the route became equally well-known to the enemy. Such knowledge might not harm a strongly-escorted convoy in the Channel or in passage across the Atlantic. But it was a very real danger after the convoy's arrival in the Caribbean, especially when the merchantmen were dispersed to the individual islands. French privateers invariably concentrated in those waters through which they knew the trade must pass.

The threat was obviously greater to ships sailing independently than to those with even a weak escort. In fact during the period, very few attacks were made by privateers upon large escorted convoys.[277] Nevertheless it is clear that after the Atlantic passage and landfall at Barbados, the normal outward-bound convoy became progressively less capable of defending itself. Distributing the ships to their individual destinations inevitably weakened the escort, in those very areas where the privateers operating close to their bases were strongest. Indeed, as has been shown, many merchantmen traversed the final stages of the routes to Guiana and the Bahamas without escort. Their losses became so serious by

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277. The Bahamas trade

A few vessels bound for Bahamas accompanied the main convoy from England on the route described. But the distance between Barbados and Bahamas was so great and the time taken to reach their destination so unnecessarily prolonged from their point of view that most Bahamian merchants preferred the risk of trading with independent sailers or "runners". Sometimes they took convoy as far as mid-Atlantic and then got the escort commander's permission to proceed independently to Bahamas.

1798 that the London West India Committee had to remind the Admiralty of the trade's need for protection along the whole route. Unless escort was given to each port of destination, the whole concept of convoy was destroyed in seas ' ... much infested with small privateers.'[278] While, therefore, the general planning and routeing of the outward-bound convoys was basically sound, operational weaknesses existed especially in the latter stages of the voyage.

The organization of the convoys homeward-bound from the West Indies was much more complicated. It ought, theoretically, to have been simpler in an area of similar crops and trade. There were however factors which did not occur in England but were inescapable in the Caribbean: the hurricane season, the vagaries of the sugar cane harvest and the problem of weighing the needs of the local merchants and planters against those of the station commanders.

Responsibility for appointing homeward-bound convoys rested with the commanders-in-chief of the Jamaica and Leeward Islands stations. Although the initial steps were taken by the Admiralty and West India Committee in London, they had no real control over their appointment. The distance between London and the Caribbean and the resultant communications delay was partly responsible. More important was the fact that the

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278. WIM. Minutes of the Committee meeting of November 27, 1798.

assembly and departure of the convoys entirely depended on local conditions and circumstances - which only those who were there could assess. Thus the composition and sailing dates of the convoys were decided after joint discussion between the station admirals and local merchants and planters. Another point was that, in contrast to the outward convoys, the return trade sailed for England in two distinct sections and by different routes - one from Jamaica and the other from the Leeward Islands.[279] This clear separation lay emphasis upon the responsibility of the station admiral for convoy arrangements within his command.

Convoy arrangements were affected by the frequency of hurricanes in the Caribbean during the months of August, September and October. Marine underwriters always charged double premium on vessels which remained in the area during that period. Lloyds would only insure vessels at the standard rate if it could be shown that they had cleared from Jamaica not later than July 26th and from the Leeward Islands not later than August 1st.[280] As a result the July convoys were always large, with merchantmen jostling to join in time. If the sugar crop was delayed, the difficulties multiplied.

By far the greatest influence upon the convoy schedules,

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279. See pp.150-7 for their description.

280. WIM: Minutes of meeting of Committee, January 12, 1798.

however, was exerted by the principal commodity the merchant ships brought home - sugar. To understand why, an outline of its production in the West Indies must be given. Briefly the seed was planted between October and January and after twelve to fourteen months' growth the canes were cut and crushed in mills. The extracted juice was then boiled in vats, from which molasses was drawn off as the raw material for distillation into rum. The brown residue remaining formed the muscovado sugar, which was then packed into barrels. Normally the planter aimed to have all his muscovado in cask and ready for shipment by mid-summer.[281]

Unfortunately so far as convoys were concerned, wide variations existed throughout the Caribbean both in methods of cane cultivation and in the harvesting season. There were great differences even within the Lesser Antilles. The Barbados planters often used to "clay" or semi-refine their sugars. This practice enhanced their value on the London market but could result in shipments being as much as two months behind those of the neighbouring islands. By contrast, harvesting on the Antigua estates was usually completed much earlier than elsewhere; there was bitter rivalry between the two islands as a result.[282] Moreover, the Guiana plantations

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281. Chambers Encycl. (1959), vol. XIII, pp. 265 - 266.

282. Richard Pares: 'War and trade in the West Indies ... ', pp. 307 - 308.

followed yet another seasonal pattern. As mainland crops they were not only cultivated quite differently from those on the islands, the harvest season was much earlier. In consequence, the increasingly important Guiana sugar trade would have benefited by convoys sailing for England in January or February. But for years the old system prevailed, whereby the first convoys of the season did not depart from the Leeward Islands until April or May.[283]

Any mishap to the cane harvest brought serious dislocation to convoy arrangements. In April 1794, Admiral Jervis was informed by a group of leading Antigua merchants that: ' ... the lateness of the crop will not permit our sugars to be shipped in time for the arranged departure of the convoy.'[284] With difficulty the station admiral recast the entire assembly and escort plan for the command and the convoy's departure was postponed until the end of May. Four years later heavy rainfall throughout the Leeward Islands in June delayed the harvest so much, that large quantities of sugar remained to be exported after the final convoy of the season had sailed on August 1st. After repeated requests, the Admiralty agreed to appoint a special convoy, departing from Antigua on October 10th after the hurrican season was over.[285]

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283. Ragatz, L.J.: 'The Fall of the Planter Class in the British Caribbean, 1763 - 1822',

284. ADM 1/316: Jervis to Stephens, April 13, 1794.

285. WIM: Minutes of Committee meeting, August 3, 1798.

Since the planters entirely depended upon England for the shipment of stores, casks and equipment, further disruption could be caused by the late arrival of an outward-bound convoy. Sugar production on Jamaica in March 1794 was affected in just this way: ' ... the crops throughout the island have been considerably retarded for want of the animal supplies and especially as regards the articles of wood hoops, copper nails, etc. for making hogsheads and puncheons.'[286] The harvest was delayed six weeks as a result. Only a few vessels were ready to sail from Port Royal at the appointed time and the convoy's departure was postponed until May 20th.

The last aspect of organizing the homeward-bound convoys to be considered concerns the problem of liaison between merchant, planter and station admiral. Much as the planter wanted his crop to be shipped at the right time and the merchant his vessels protected by convoy, their wishes had to be offset against the squadron's ability to provide them. The acute shortage of small warships for escort purposes on both stations has already been noted.[287] Normally the first step in the sequence of convoy assembly was taken by the merchants and planters. Their request for the appointment of a convoy on a certain date was made to the station commander through their representative on

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286. ADM 1/245: John Jacques, custos of Kingston, to Commodore Ford, March 17, 1794.

287. See chapters I, p.38, 40; and II, p. 88-9.

each island, known as the 'custos'. It was the duty of the 'custos' to ensure that the trade was ready in time and to relay the station commander's instructions to all concerned. John Jacques, who was 'chief custos' of Jamaica between 1794 and 1798, frequently appears in the station journals in this connection.[288] After receiving a request for convoy, the station commander decided its date of departure and arranged for the provision of an escort. Once the date had been chosen an interval of about six weeks was allowed the merchants and shipowners, to collect their vessels and assemble at the appointed rendezvous. It was particularly important for the escorts to be there in good time, ' ... to prevent the merchant ships or storeships being kept in demurrage.'[289, 290]

The sequence of assembly worked tolerably well in practice, but was liable to break down at several points. Dilatoriness by merchantmen in reaching the rendezvous was a frequent cause of trouble. Many ships used to delay joining convoy until the last possible moment - in order to keep their cargoes and crews freshest and profit by most favourable terms of insurance. Two

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288. For instance in: ADM 1/245: John Jacques to Commodore Ford, March 17, 1794.
ADM 1/247: same to Rear-Admiral William Parker, June 16, 1796.

289, 290. Barham Papers (N.R.S.), vol. III, p. 37. A similar warning occurs in ADM 1/246: Ford to Stephens, March 30, 1795. 'Demurrage' was a technical term used in insurance and maritime law to refer to a vessel or its cargo detained in port beyond an agreed time.

examples amongst many will suffice. In February 1797, two warships reached Mole St Nicolas from the rendezvous at Port Antonio, Jamaica, escorting a convoy of only five vessels. The Kingston custos had originally said that twenty-eight ships would be ready to sail on January 12th. Despite a three-week postponement and every effort to collect the trade from the Jamaican ports, only five left on the appointed day.[291] Quite rightly, the escort commander pointed out that: ' ... unless the merchants are more punctual in assembling their ships, it will be impossible to carry on the service without prejudice to other objects of importance'.[292] A similar case occurred five months later. Captain Bissett, the escort commander, waited three days beyond the appointed sailing date for his convoy to assemble at Port Antonio.[293] After being forced to divide the escort in order to round up the laggards, the convoy eventually arrived very late at Mole St Nicolas and with many fewer ships than originally intended.[294]

Once assembled at the rendezvous, the entire responsibility for protecting the convoy until it reached its destination rested

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291. ADM 1/248: Vice-Admiral Hyde Parker to Stephens, February 14 1797.

292. ADM 1/248: Captain Brooking, in command of H.M.S. Jamaica, to Vice-Admiral Hyde Parker, February 11, 1797.

293. ADM 1/248: Captain Bissett, in command of H.M.S. Quebec, to same, August 23, 1797.

294. ADM 1/248: Hyde Parker to Stephens, August 26, 1797.

with the escort commander. Often the onerous duty was well performed, as several resolutions preserved in the West India Committee records, congratulating officers concerned, testify. Much depended on the individual commander, the size of convoy and escort and the weather encountered during the voyage. Frequentl the inadequacy of the escort made an arduous and unpopular duty more difficult. Early in 1794, for instance, the shortage of warships in the Jamaica squadron became so acute that only a captured French frigate was available to escort the February convoy. Hurriedly fitted out and renamed H.M.S. Convert she sailed from Bluefields Bay on February 5th with thirty-two merchantmen. More ships joined off the north coast of Jamaica unti the convoy numbered fifty-five sail under the sole charge of the Convert. Two days out from Port Antonio - in the darkness of the early hours of February 8th - the convoy struck the reefs off the east coast of Grand Cayman Island. The Convert and nine of the merchantmen were wrecked although most of the crews were rescued. At the ensuing court-martial Captain Lawford was not exonerated but the main cause of the disaster was attributed to the inadequacy of the escort, both in numbers and calibre.[295, 2]

Sometimes relations between the escort commander and his convoy became very strained during the voyage. The case of Captain James Norman of the Medusa was fortunately exceptional,

295, 296. ADM 1/245: (1) Rear-Admiral Ford to Stephens: February 20 and April 3, 1794.

February 27, 1794. (2) Captain Lawford to Rear-Admiral Ford: (the convoy report).

but showed what could happen. A convoy of 130 merchantmen sailed from Jamaica on July 28th 1795, under the charge of Captain Norman in the frigate Medusa, with the sloop Triton in support. After its arrival in England a protest signed by twenty-five of the ships' masters was delivered to the West India Committee. The escort commander's conduct was so severely criticised that the committee instituted a full enquiry. Their findings disclosed a number of disturbing incidents. Ten days out from Port Antonio the convoy had been scattered by a storm. Instead of laying-to and allowing the merchant ships to regroup, Captain Norman forged ahead. Throughout the Atlantic passage the Medusa remained from six to ten leagues ahead of the convoy - logging as much as 185 miles a day - although fully aware that many of the ships were too far astern to read her signals. Most were not coppered and their sailing speed was in any case reduced by the heavy cargoes they carried. In a desperate effort to keep up with the escort, several lost spars or split their rigging. The results were disastrous. When the Channel was reached on October 2nd only 35 ships, the fastest sailers, still remained in touch with the escort. A group of between 50 and 60 merchantmen which had fallen completely behind by September 13th, still held their course in an effort to rejoin. Sixteen of these were taken by French privateers before they could reach safety. The West India Committee report was sent to the Admiralty, who ordered Captain Norman to be court-martialled. In February 1796

he was found guilty of gross negligence and reduced to half-pay.[297, 298]

The question of how many homeward-bound convoys should sail annually, and at what time of the year, was another crucial factor. It has been said that the hurricane season prevented departure during August and September.[299] The period between December and March was also unsuitable, owing to winter gales in the North Atlantic and the fact that the sugar cane had not then been harvested.[300] As regards the months which remained, the West Indian merchants and planters had in the past been satisfied with a straightforward system. This comprised the departure of two convoys each from Jamaica and the Leeward Islands during the season. The first left England in the late autumn and returned from the Caribbean the following spring; the second reached the Caribbean in the spring and left again for home in June or July. The volume of West Indies trade during the early and middle decades of the eighteenth century had, with some difficulty, been accommodated within this framework. But by the end of the century it was no longer adequate. The whole scale of Caribbean exports, principally sugar but also other produce, had grown enormously, as had the number of merchant ships wishing to take convoy. It became apparent soon after

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297, 298. WIM: Minutes of Committee's proceedings, December 9, 1795; January 2, 1796.

299. See p. 137.

300. Except in Guiana; see p. 139.

the outbreak of war in February 1793 that more homeward-bound convoys must be appointed and their dates of sailing reconsidered.

Little was done for some time but in September 1794, the Committee of West India Merchants prepared a memorandum on convoys for the Admiralty. Included were recommendations about their frequency and date of departure and they proposed the following time-table:-

Optimum Period of Departure		Number of Convoys (annually)	
		From Jamaica	From Leeward Islands
1. SUMMER	April to end of July	3	3
2. AUTUMN	October to November	1	0
3. WINTER	January to February	1 (small)	1 (small)
	Total:	5	4

301

The dates chosen by the Committee coincided with the anticipated arrivals - in February, April, June and October - of the outward-bound convoys from England. More important was the rise in the number of summer convoys to three. Also, because the pressure for more convoys was so great, the Committee

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301. WIM. Minutes Book (March 1794 - December 1802): Proceedings, September 16, 1794.

did not hesitate to ask for the appointment of a small winter convoy in January/February in spite of the risk of bad weather during those months.

The Admiralty accepted the proposals and the new schedules began in the 1795 season and continued throughout the war. In 1798 it became necessary to define the sailing dates of the three main summer convoys from each station more precisely:-

Optimum Period of Departure		Summer Convoys	
		From Jamaica	From Leeward Islands
SUMMER	1. Not later than May 10th	1	1
	2. About June 30th	1	1
	3. Not later than July 26th	1	0
	4. Not later than August 1st	0	1
	Total:	3	3

302, 303

There were good reasons for this. Demands for shipping and convoys were heaviest in the months of May, June and July, the peak of the sugar cane harvest. Earlier in the season the

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302, 303. Table prepared from information in the following:-
WIM. Minutes of Committee's proceedings, November 27, 1798.
ADM 1/321: Harvey to Nepean, April 8 and May 13, 1798.

produce was not ready and the beginning of August heralded the hurricane season. It has been said that Lloyd's charged double insurance on all vessels still at Jamaica after July 26th and in the Leeward Islands after August 1st.[304] To avoid chaos and overcrowding in the last summer convoy, therefore, more attention had clearly to be paid to the timing of the earlier sailings.

Even so, it soon became imperative to appoint an autumn convoy. Merchants and planters were unanimous in insisting that vessels which had missed the July/August convoy should not be compelled to waste months waiting for the departure of the first convoy the following year. 'A convoy from Jamaica in October is always necessary, since much of the Jamaica crop of sugar and other produce can often only be collected after July 26th. Much loss and inconvenience has been caused by the failure to send an October convoy in 1797.'[305] Autumn convoys were also instituted on the Leewards station. That for 1796 sailed from St Kitts on November 28th, and for 1798 on October 30th.[306]

The size of the homeward-bound convoys was invariably large - 150 to 200 merchantmen. By comparison the escort was exceedingly

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304. See p. 137.

305. WIM. Minutes of Committee's proceedings, January 12, 1798.

306. ADM 1/319: Christian to Nepean, December 22, 1796.
ADM 1/321: Harvey to Nepean, December 8, 1798.

small, except if units of the station squadron happened to be returning to England at the same time. The escort normally comprised one or two frigates and sloops, depending on the size of the convoy but often it might only be a single sloop. The details of known convoys sailing from the Caribbean during the period are revealing:-

Date of Departure from West Indies	Size of Convoy	Escort	Remarks
June 1793	150	1	Plus support squadro
July 1793	158	1	Plus support squadro
July 1794	183	1	
October 1794	183	4*	*Two frigates and two sloops
May 1795	188	1	Including 47 military transports
June 1796	170	2	
July 1796	177	1	Including 57 military transports
May 1797	179	4	
May 1798	160	3*	*Including one ship-of-the-line
June 1798	170	2	
July 1798	100	4	
May 1800	206	1	

307, 308, 309, 310

(see footnotes next page)

The ratio between convoy and escort is 168·6/2·1; in other words, each escorting warship had to look after eighty merchantmen.

In contrast to the outward-bound trade from England, the convoys from Jamaica and the Leeward Islands sailed in two distinct sections and followed different routes for the homeward passage.

Of the two, the assembly of the Jamaica convoys was less complicated. Clearly the task of collecting ships from ports along the Jamaica coast was easier than from numerous scattered islands. There were three convoy rendezvous on the Jamaica coast - Negril and Bluefields in the west, Port Antonio in the north-east.[311] The former were chosen if the convoy intended to proceed via the Gulf of Mexico, the latter if through the Windward Passage.

In the initial stages of assembly, the trade from the ports along the south coast of Jamaica normally collected at Port Royal and then proceeded together under escort to the rendezvous. Few difficulties were experienced by this valuable section of the trade as it passed close to the squadron's main naval base. Collecting the north coast trade was much less easy. The

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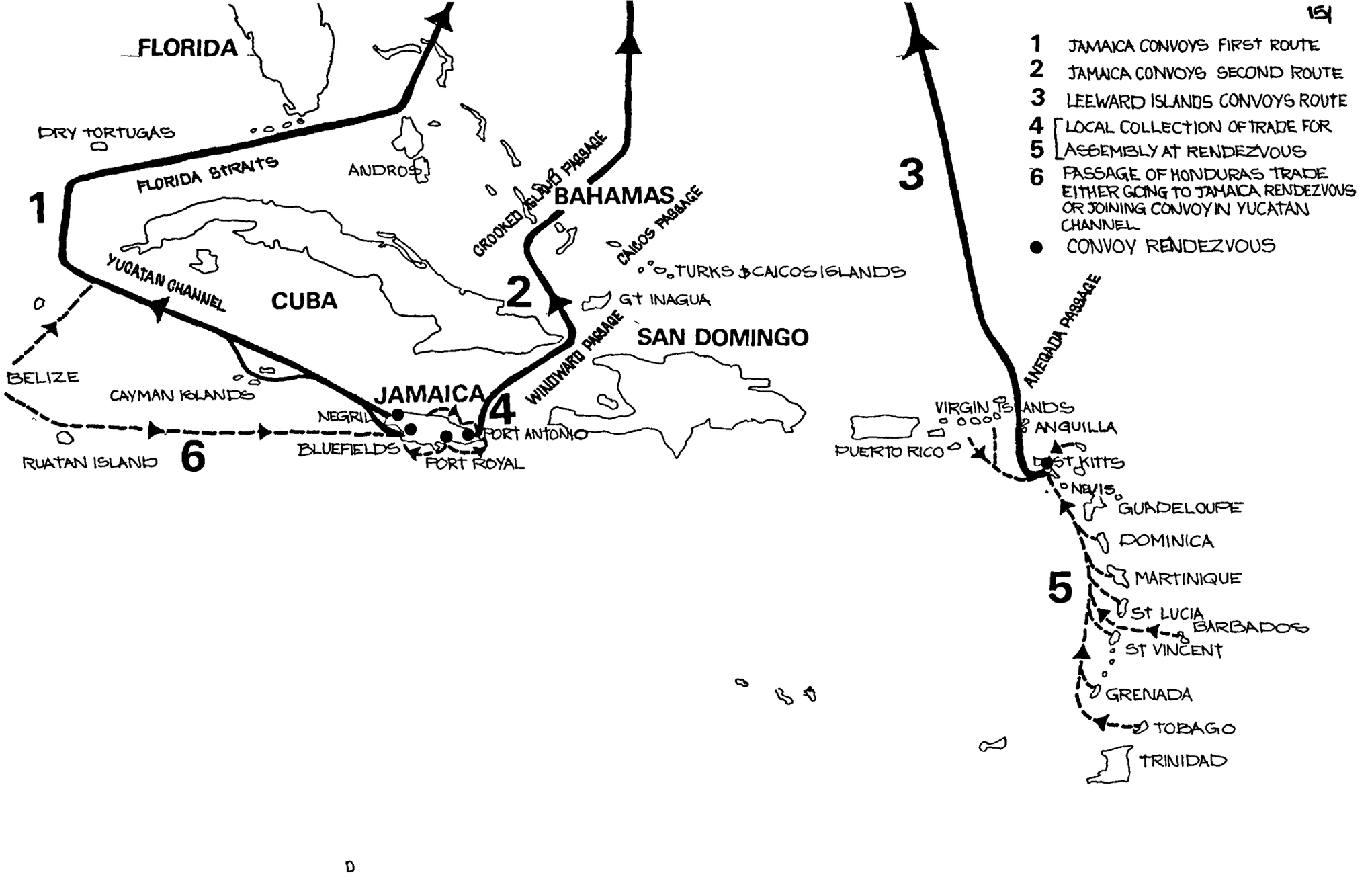
307, 308, 309, 310. Compiled from Lieutenant-Commander D.W. Waters unpublished paper: 'Notes on convoy system in naval warfare ... (December 1957) and from information in:
ADM 1/321: Harvey to Nepean, April 8, 1798; A.D.M. 1/248: Hyde Parker to Nepean, May 12, 1798, and ADM 1/3992: Lloyds Committee to the Admiralty, September 15, 1798.

311. See map 8, p. 151.



MAP 8. Routes of Homeward:bound Convoys from Jamaica and Leeward Islands.

plantations were scattered and remote and contrary winds and currents made its access difficult from Port Royal. In particular the area was notorious for enemy privateers.[312] Usually one sloop of the Jamaica squadron was on permanent patrol off the north coast and two others collected the trade and escorted it to the rendezvous.[313, 314]

Convoys from Bluefields and Negril Bay proceeded home via the Gulf of Mexico. They first steered north-east to pass through the Yucatan Channel between Cuba and the mainland. Occasionally a convoy would call at the Cayman Islands on the way to pick up a cargo of tortoiseshell. The passage of the Yucatan Channel was not difficult, provided the convoy kept well out from the Cuban shore to avoid the strong currents setting to leeward. Thereafter the course was due north to the Dry Tortugas, before any attempt was made to get to the east through the Florida Straits where the current was swift. Once clear of the Straits, the convoy followed the Gulf Stream north as far as Newfoundland and then picked up the Westerlies for the Atlantic crossing.

The alternative route began at the Port Antonio rendezvous and ran north-east through the Windward Passage. It was much shorter than via the Gulf of Mexico but winds in the Windward

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312. Emphasized, for instance, in: ADM 1/246: William Parker to Nepean, June 29, 1795.

313. ADM 1/245: Ford to Stephens, July 26, 1794.

314. ADM 1/246: William Parker to Nepean, October 25, 1795.

Passage were frequently dead against, which at certain times of the year made it quite impracticable. Thereafter the convoys usually sailed through the Bahamas by way of the Crooked Island Passage. The more direct Caicos Passage was normally avoided because of contrary winds. North of the Bahamas the route linked up with that via the Gulf of Mexico and the same course home was then followed.

Generally the Jamaica station commanders preferred to send the trade through the Windward rather than the Gulf Passage. Not only was it shorter; gaining a full 5 degrees easting was a great advantage, especially for the bigger convoys. However the struggle for San Domingo closely affected the use of the Windward Passage. In this connection the crucial importance of the base at Mole St Nicolas has been described.[315] After the British forces were evacuated from San Domingo in October 1798, the route became increasingly dangerous;[316] from 1802 onwards all Jamaica convoys returned home via the Gulf of Mexico.

As well as Jamaica, the station admiral was responsible for the safety of all the Honduras and Bahamas trade which wished to return to England in convoy. It proved very difficult to combine the former with the Jamaica convoys. Because Honduras lay far to windward of Jamaica, ships trying to reach the convoy rendezvous faced a long struggle against adverse winds. The

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315, 316. See chapter II, pp. 79 and 113.

voyage could take as long as six weeks to accomplish. Furthermore, there were no sugar plantations in Honduras. The principal exports of the British settlements on that coast were tropical hardwoods, especially mahogany. Adjusting the export of these materials seasonally to coincide with the sugar trade convoys from Jamaica was no easy matter.

In the Honduras forests the trees were felled as far as two hundred miles into the interior, from where they were floated down river to the coast. On arrival it was essential that their shipment should not be delayed, otherwise the floating logs split in the water or became infested with teredo worm.[317] Normally two convoys sailed from Belize annually - in January and July - under the escort of one sloop despatched from Jamaica. Their departure was timed to coincide with the arrival of the log-rafts at the coast. If the main Jamaica convoy was proceeding home via the Gulf of Mexico, it was usual - particularly in July - for the Honduras trade to join it in the Yucatan Channel.[318] On the other hand, when the Windward Passage was chosen the Belize convoy was forced to make the arduous voyage to the rendezvous at Port Antonio. In the circumstances the trade sometimes preferred to run the risk of proceeding home independently.[319]

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317. For biology see Encycl. Brit., 11th edn (1911), vol. xxvi, pp. 637-9.

318. ADM 1/245: Ford to Stephens, May 12 and 17, 1793.

319. ADM 1/245: Same to same, July 26, 1794.

The assembly of the homeward-bound convoys on the Leeward Islands station was much more complicated. Without a central focus like Jamaica, the trade had to be collected from many islands spread over a wide area, from the Virgin Islands to Tobago and the Guiana coast. Much could happen before all the ships reached the convoy rendezvous. One broken link in the chain - a late harvest on Barbados or dilatory merchants at Antigua - was sufficient to dislocate the entire system.

During the first ten years of the war, Basseterre on the island of St Christopher was the convoy rendezvous for the whole Leewards station trade. After 1802 it was changed to Tortola in the Virgin Islands. The method of bringing the trade to the rendezvous was clearly established. About a month before the convoy was due to sail, the station admiral notified each island governor of the proposed arrangements.

Warships, normally two or three frigates or sloops, were then detached from the squadron to collect the trade. It was usual for the escort to start at Tobago in the extreme south and then proceed northwards through the Windward and Leeward Islands, picking up the trade as it passed, until the rendezvous was reached at St Kitts. Only on the few occasions when several warships were available, could the escort commander wait at a central point like Fort Royal, Martinique, while the

trade was collected.[320, 321] More often the escort was too small to be divided and each island had to be visited in turn.[322]

The British occupation of Guiana and Trinidad in 1796/7 complicated the assembly of the Leewards station convoys. As early as May 1796, it had been suggested that as the passage between Berbice and Tobago took only three days, escorts collecting merchantmen from the Windward Islands should also call at the Guiana coast to pick up any trade there wishing to take convoy.[323] Fortunately for the station commander, who found the existing arrangements sufficiently onerous, there were decisive objections to the proposal. The seasonal differences in harvesting the sugar cane which occurred between Guiana and the Caribbean islands have been mentioned.[324] Moreover, the Guiana river estuaries were frequently obstructed by sandbars and laden ships could normally cross them only during the spring and autumn tides. For these reasons it proved impossible

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320, 321. As happened, for instance, in May 1795 when Rear-Admiral Charles Thompson assembled the homeward-bound convoy. See Nat. Mar. Mus.: Caldwell Papers (CAL/116): Caldwell's journal and letters to Admiralty, April 20 and May 1, 1795. And Nat. Mar. Mus.: Thompson Papers (THO/8): Caldwell to Thompson, May 13, 1795.

322. ADM 1/316: Gardner to Stephens, June 3, 1793.

323. ADM 1/319: Captain Parr, off Demerara, to Rear-Admiral Christian, May 13, 1796.

324. See p. 139.

to integrate the Guiana trade with the convoy arrangements for the rest of the station. The Guiana merchants themselves strongly objected to sending their ships to such a distant rendezvous as St Kitts. Having for years unsuccessfully petitioned for direct convoy to England, in the end their merchandise was almost entirely carried by ships sailing independently.

Once assembly was completed at Basseterre, the Leeward Islands convoys sailed for England by a clearly-defined route. Having passed through the Anegada Passage,[325] where the trade from Tortola was collected, course was shaped due north towards Bermuda. No attempt was made to gain easting before reaching latitude 30° N.[326] There, any warships which had been detached from the squadron to augment the escort parted company and returned to the station. From Bermuda the convoys steered north-east as far as 40° N. off the Newfoundland Bank, then picked up the Gulf Stream and the prevailing westerlies to carry them across the Atlantic to England.

In spite of more convoys being appointed during the period, a lot of the Caribbean trade continued to be carried by ships sailing independently. No legislation existed before 1798 which made it compulsory to take convoy; even afterwards,

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325. See Map 8, p. 151.

326. op. cit. Lucy F. Horsfall: 'The West India trade', p. 171.

exemption was easy to obtain. The Government proceeded very slowly in the whole matter of convoy legislation. Two Orders in Council, issued soon after the war began, authorized the arming of merchant ships for their own defence and a procedure whereby vessels already armed could obtain licences to sail without convoy.[327, 328] But much more stringent regulations were required.

Legal compulsion to take convoy was first introduced in the Convoy Act of June 1798, severe penalties being imposed on those who failed to do so.[329] Nevertheless, large numbers of merchantships obtained exemption - including all which were licensed to sail independently; all sailing from foreign ports which had no licensing authority and all trading in areas where no organized convoy system existed. In this way hundreds of ships avoided the compulsion to take convoy.[330]

For many engaged in the West India trade the attractions of working independently were considerable. Despite the greater risks in wartime, the voyages were often extremely profitable. Their ships could reach the markets ahead of the slow-moving convoys or in the long intervals between each. They followed a more direct route to their port of destination and, above all,

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327, 328. ADM 1/5179: Admiralty - Orders in Council. February 13 and March 3, 1793.

329. The provisions of the Convoy Act of 1798 are given in full in: Parlt. Reg., vol. VI (1798), pp. 151 - 155.

330. See: Capt. R. Hudleston's unpublished paper: 'The History of Convoy' (1912), part V.

avoided the chronic delays which beset all convoys, in assembly and on passage.

A good 'runner' or independent sailer could make three voyages annually to the Caribbean and back. Outward-bound from England it was the best means of shipping perishable goods which had to reach their destination without delay. For the home run it was the best, sometimes the only, means of transporting West Indian produce during times of the year when no convoys were appointed or from areas badly served by the system.

Similarly,, many merchants and shipowners of the British outports for the Caribbean trade resented the loss of time and business caused by having to send their ships to the convoy rendezvous at Portsmouth and Cork, with all the irksome delays which that implied. Their local papers were full of notices advertising the departure of fast-sailing 'runners' to the West Indies. Thus, to give one example, the following appeared on the front page of the 'Bristol Mercury', September 3rd, 1797: ' ... the Hector: For Kingston and Morant, Jamaica ... mounting 14 carriage guns, with men answerable. Will sail early in October, a running ship ... '[331]

The Convoy Act was hardly enforced in the British West

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331. B.M. Newspaper Library, Colindale.
Ibid. 'The Liverpool Advertiser' of February 20, 1797, describes the launching of the 'runner' Watt, intended for the Jamaica trade.

Indian colonies. Merchantmen bound for England were cleared from their ports by customs, whether they had licences of exemption from convoy or not. It was not simply that the customs were lax; the authority for issuing licences of exemption was never properly organized during the period. In some islands the power rested with the governor, in others with the local 'custos'. More often than not, no authority to license existed at all.

During 1798 interpretation of the Convoy Act became so confused that several lengthy memoranda passed between the London West India Committee and the Admiralty. The Committee feared that inflexible compulsion to take convoy would cause serious inconvenience and delay in the islands: ' ... unless the convoys are more frequent than of late years and unless the colonial governors or council have the power to grant licences in particular cases.'[332] When the Admiralty failed to respond, they pressed for an amendment of the 'warranty of departure with convoy' clause, which the new act demanded be written into the insurance policy of every merchantman. In future it should be qualified by the addition of the phrase: ' ... unless by particular licence according to the provisions of the Bill.'[333] Determined to solve the problem of exemption

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332. WIC: Minutes of proceedings and correspondence between Mr. Beeston Long, the chairman, and the Admiralty, March 2, 1798.

333, 334. WIC.: Minutes of proceedings ... March 2, 1798.

from convoy, the West India Committee emphasized to the Admiralty, how disastrous were the consequences of ships missing an appointed convoy. By the Convoy Act there was no alternative but their waiting weeks even months for the next one. Most shipmasters in such a predicament willingly paid insurance at the long premium. The Committee urged the creation of licensing authorities on every island without delay.[334] The power should be vested in the colonial governors or island assemblies and not the station commanders, who were too involved with their squadron duties. In September 1798 the Admiralty accepted the suggestion[335] but it was a long time before the system became properly organized.

Little has been said about convoy discipline. Escort duty was one of the most hated tasks in the Royal Navy and one which few commanders undertook with any pleasure. There was little compensation for the heavy responsibility and prolonged delays. If all went well they might earn the gratitude of the convoy and a gift of plate from the West India Committee or Lloyds.[336] If not, they faced the wrath of the shipmasters,

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333, 334. WIC.: Minutes of proceedings ... March 2, 1798.

335. ADM 2/604: Secretary's Out-Letters: Nepean to Beeston Long (chairman of the WIC), August 1, 1798.

336. Thus Captain Roddam Horne of H.M.S. Africa received a handsome dinner service and the congratulations of the West India Committee in 1796. SEE: WIM: minutes of proceedings, October 18 and December 13, 1796.

merchants and owners and sometimes a court-martial.

The problem is perhaps best shown by quoting extracts from the log of one escort ship during a typical voyage. In 1797 Captain James Bissett, with the frigate Janus, 32, and one sloop in company, was escort commander of a homeward-bound convoy of 54 merchantmen which sailed from Port Antonio, Jamaica, on July 26th and arrived in the Downs on October 3rd:-

'July 26th Signalled to weigh; convoy joined by 15 sail from the south side of the island (Jamaica); signalled for ships to windward to bear down into wake of convoy ...

July 31st Signalled for ships astern to make more sail (not complyd with) ...

August 5th 17 sail joined convoy from the Mole ... convoy all in sight, in number 54.

August 7th ... Signalled with gun for convoy to close during the night.

August 28th Corvo 391 leagues ... progress during day of convoy only 20 leagues.

August 30th - September 1st Peggy transport hailed and told us that they made three feet of water in one hour . survey'd and found unfit to proceed further; burnt her and took out the people.

September 3rd Signalled Quebec (the escort sloop) to keep rear of convoy in close order.

September 5th Fired a gun shotted at ye Fingall for not complying with signal.

September 16th Strong gales. Heavy sailing ships at some distance astern. ½ past 9 saw a bright light astern ... a brig coming before the wind, through neglect not paying due attention to their steerage ... ran us athwart hawse, carried away our bowsprit, foremast and main topsail yard with several other damages ... at 10 made signal of distress ...

September 17th .... on the previous night 4 sail of the convoy parted company.

September 19th .... made signal with gun to call in all the detached ships of the convoy.

September 20th Overpress'd with sail having in tow the brig Musgrove of Whitehaven that lst her mainmast.

September 25th Sighted land, NNW 14 leagues (Mizen Head) ... 23 sail of convoy in sight.

September 29th Made signal with 4 guns to wore; in wearing the Bushey Park ran on board us but sustained no damage. 3 of the transports parted company in the night.

October 3rd Signalled the convoy to make the best of their way to their port in view; at 9 came to with the best bower in the Downs ... ' 337

In summary, the convoy system as it operated to and from the West Indies during the period was a necessary inconvenience. In spite of its many faults - delay, cumbersomeness, unpopularity and difficulties in organization and control - the system sharply reduced mercantile shipping losses through enemy action. This was not to say that ships sailing without convoy did not continue to play an important part in the Caribbean trade. Hundreds

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337. Nat. Mar. Mus.: Lieutenants Logs.
The log of the Janus, August 4, 1796 to November 29, 1797. (Adm/L/J.16).
Other logs of ships escorting convoys to and from the West Indies during the period tell a very similar story. See in particular (Nat. Mar. Mus.: same source).:-
The log of the Swan, September 1794 to October 1799. (Adm/L/S.583).
The log of the Raisonable, January 1795 to December 1796. (Adm/L/R.28.18.).

of independent 'runners' still operated and in many instances the provisions of the Convoy Act were blatantly disregarded.

Nevertheless the effectiveness of the convoys can be proven statistically. Although the facts available are few and not altogether reliable, the evidence is conclusive. Between 1793 and 1805 over 6,500 British and colonial-registered merchant ships were lost or captured, that is an average of 500 per annum. Yet in 1797 - the year before the Convoy Act came into force - the loss had risen to 949 ships. A Convoy Register (covering the period April 1793 to December 1796 only) which has survived, gives the following remarkable statistics:-

Year	Convoys recorded	Ships convoyed	Ships taken in convoy	Stragglers from convoy taken	Annual average loss (all causes)
1793	26	1,239	3	61	ca. 500
1794	18	1,125	2	42	
1795	42	1,350	30	219	
1796	44	2,063	0	76	
Total	130	5,777	35	398	ca. 2,000

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338. Admiralty Library: Convoy Register No. 41. (April 1793 - February 1797).
Volume I of Lloyd's Proceedings (1771 - 1804) quotes an average annual loss of 400 merchant ships from enemy privateer action, during the period 1793 - 1802.

In other words during the first four years of the war only 21.5% of the total marine casualty was of ships belonging to an appointed convoy at the time of their loss. Moreover, most of those were vessels which had, for one reason or another, become detached from the convoy. So the true loss of merchant ships while actually in convoy was extremely small, only 1.8% of the total. Therein lies the complete vindication of the convoy system. No further doubts could be expressed at the time as to its necessity. The main problem which remained was that convoys should be more efficient and more frequent.

CHAPTER 4

CARIBBEAN MARITIME TRADE, 1783 - 1802

Part i: The ships, the commodities and the Free Port System

Between the end of the American War in 1783 and the outbreak of the French Revolutionary War ten years later, trade between Britain and her Caribbean colonies rose sharply.[339] Even in the war years which followed, the growth was hardly checked despite severe losses by enemy privateer action. As the volume of trade increased so did the number of merchant ships engaged. Available statistics of entries and clearances from the ports of Britain and the colonies, confirm the trend:-

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339. Detailed statistics appear in P.R.O.: BT 6/185: 'State of the Trade of Great Britain in its imports and exports ... '. For part of these, see appendix 5.

Trade	Number of British-registered vessels								
	1784	1792	1793	1794	1795	1796	1797	1798	1799
1. Entries into Britain from the British West Indies	487	544	590	571	602	617	577	655	829
2. Clearances from the British West Indies to Britain	-	705	726	718	608	-	-	-	-
3. Entries into the British West Indies from Britain	-	503	406	564	510	-	-	-	-
4. Clearances from Britain to the British West Indies	422	482	453	572	501	597	594	675	696

340, 341

Of greater significance than the number of ships, however, was the rise in overall tonnage:-

340, 341. Calculated from entries in BT 6/185 (see previous page) and P.R.O.: Customs 17/15 to 17/19 inclusive. For part of these, see appendices.

The figures here shown are not directly comparable. Due to the duration of the Atlantic passage, there is a disparity between clearances from the West Indies and arrivals in Britain, and vice versa.

Tonnage of British-registered vessels
000 tons [342]

	1784	1792	1793	1794	1795	1796	1797	1798	1799
5. Entries into Britain from British West Indies	106.2	130.5	139.6	136.0	143.6	167.4	153.2.	172.5	218.2
6. Clearances from Britain to British West Indies	88.2	121.8	114.4	143.6	110.5	122.4	155.9	175.1	185.2

[343]

This was due mainly to an increase in the individual tonnage of ships engaged in the trade. Until 1750 the typical London West Indiaman displaced 150 to 200 tons, there being no equivalent to the great merchant ships of the East India Company. On the contrary, many ships of less than 100 tons crossed the Atlantic to the Caribbean. This was particularly the case from the ports of Bristol, Liverpool and Glasgow, where small brigs, schooners and snows persisted in the trade until the end of the century.

Moreover, there was little specialization of function.

342. Until the mid-1770s ship displacement in Britain was calculated as tons burden. It was gradually replaced by measured tons, which became the standard practice after the general Registration of Ships began in 1786.

343. BT 6/185: 'State of the Trade of Great Britain ... ' See also appendix 5.

Most vessels carried within their cramped holds or 'tween decks a bewildering variety of cargoes - slaves, ivory, provisions, plantation stores, manufactures, tropical produce and timber.[344] But in the last decades of the century, more ships specifically designed for the West Indies trade were built in British yards. The principal impetus to this development came from the expanding sugar trade. The need was for larger vessels, with greater capacity in their holds for single types of cargo. Typical was the ship Hannah, 322 tons, plying between Dominica and London. In the summer of 1792 she shipped home 315 hogsheads of muscovado sugar, 49 puncheons of rum and little other cargo.[345] An added reason for larger ships was the growing importance of the timber and dyewoods trade of Honduras and Jamaica. Small vessels could not handle the bulky logs of mahogany, fustic and lignum vitae.

By the 1790's, then, West Indiamen of over 300 tons were becoming common and the bulk of the traffic was being undertaken by ships of 150 to 300 tons. Examination of entries in the 'London Registries of Shipping: Foreign Trade'[346] and 'Lloyd's Registers of shipping' for the period confirm

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344. Horsfall, Lucy F.: 'The West Indies trade'; chapter in 'Trade Winds ... ', pp. 177 et seq.

345. HO 76/2: 'Accounts by naval officer at Roseau, Dominica .. July to October 1792'. See appendix 19.

346. The two sets of Registries - Foreign and Domestic Trade - covering the years 1787 to 1802 are preserved in Nt. Mar. Mus.: Dept. of Manuscripts.

the trend. For instance, if three comparable samples are taken from the 'Lloyd's Registers' of 1784, 1794 and 1804,[347] certain facts emerge.

In the Register for 1784, of 50 merchant ships on direct voyage to and from Britain and the West Indies, only three displaced over 400 tons, 26 between 200 and 400 and 20 under 200 tons. In 1794, the number of ships rose to 70 and its composition changed slightly. Although there were still only three in the largest category, the number of ships of between 200 and 400 tons rose to 38. But with the Register for 1804, the shift of emphasis became very noticeable. Not only did the total rise to 102 ships, but no less than 14 were over 400 tons and over 60% of the total fell within the 200/400 tons group.[348]

The value of the 'Lloyd's Registers' is not confined to details of tonnage. Information as to the type of each vessel, its construction, ownership, port of registry and voyage-pattern is also recorded. If these details be compared in the three samples from the Registers of 1784, 1794 and 1804, significant changes are again apparent.

Comparison reveals a progressive decline in the number of the smaller types of merchantmen engaged in the West Indies

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347. See Appendices 14, 15 and 16 respectively, for these samples in full.

348. Lloyd's Registers of Shipping: 1784; 1794; 1804.

trade. Far fewer brigs, snows, sloops and schooners were operating in 1804 compared with twenty years earlier. A decline from 40% to 22% of the overall total is a very substantial one over such a short period. Equally the figures for 1804 show how the number of larger ship-rigged vessels has risen to replace them.

There are changes, too, in the pattern of where and when the ships were built. Before, during and after the American War of Independence part of the direct Britain to West Indies trade was carried in colonial-built vessels. Some had been built in Canada and Newfoundland, but more in the shipyards of New England - Boston, Philadelphia, New York and Piscatoqua. As late as 1784 these American-built ships continued to feature in the trade. But within twenty years a complete tranformation had taken place. As the nascent United States began to use her shipbuilding resources towards the creation of her own merchant marine and direct trade between her shores and the West Indies, so the proportion of plantation-built ships in the transatlantic Britain to West Indies trade rapidly declined. The Lloyds Registers bear this out. In the 1784 sample, the number of American-built ships in the trade was 32% of the total. By 1794 it had declined to 14% and, ten years later - at less than 4% - had almost disappeared altogether.[349]

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349. Samples from Lloyd's Registers of 1784, 1794 and 1804. See appendices 14, 15, 16.

Where the West Indiamen were built in Britain also fundamentally changed during the three decades in question. The Thames yards at Deptford, Rotherhithe, Limehouse and Blackwall continued to launch the larger vessels but, for the West Indies' trade at least, their proportion of the total number fell during the period. The number of ships built at Bristol,[350] in the Scottish yards at Leith and Greenock and at the smaller ports on the south and west coasts of England, showed little change. But there was a sharp increase from the shipyards of Northern England, especially the north-east. Whitby in particular emerged as a major shipbuilding port for the Caribbean trade.[351] From the samples chosen, 27% of the total number of British-built vessels were built in the north of England in 1784; 54% in 1794 and 58% in 1804. The full analysis is:-

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350. See Professor W.E. Minchinton: 'The Trade of Bristol in the eighteenth century'. (Bristol Records Society; 1957), especially pp. ix - xix, and appendices (d), (e) and (f).

351. See Richard Weatherill: 'The ancient port of Whitby and its shipping'. (Whitby; Horne & Son; 1908), especially pp. 330 - 376.

SHIPS BUILT IN BRITISH YARDS for the WEST INDIES TRADE[352]
(sample)

Shipyards	Number of ships 1784	1794	1804
River Thames	10	8	5
Bristol	3	6	10
Northern England[353]	7	26	46
Scotland	3	1	6
Other ports[354]	3	7	12
Total	26	48	79

The age of ships engaged in the trade was another important factor. Examination of the dates of build of all the vessels listed in the three samples reveals the following:-

352. Samples from Lloyd's Registers of 1784, 1794 and 1804. See appendices 14, 15, 16.

353. On the North-east coast: Whitby, Shields, Newcastle, Scarborough, Sunderland, Hull, Pillon and Alnmouth.
On the North-west coast: Liverpool, Chester, Lancaster, Whitehaven and Workington.

354. Welsh ports and Appledore, Redbridge, Topsham, Cowes, Yarmouth, Harwich and Rochester.

355

	1784		1794		1804	
	Number	% of total	Number	% of total	Number	% of total
Ships over 20 years old	7	14	14	9	3	3
Ships over 10 years old	14	28	16	23	25	25
Ships under 3 years old	6	12	18	27	26	26
Total of sample	50	-	70	-	102	-

In the earlier year nearly half the trade was carried in ships at least ten years old, in many cases much older. A decade later the proportion of newer vessels rose and by 1804 very few over twenty years old remained. The London Registries of Shipping - Foreign Trade, confirm this assessment. Of 33 ships displacing over 200 tons, entered in the Registry for January 1787 - 7 were over twenty and 7 under three years old.[356] By comparison the entries for November 1793 show

355. As 352

356. London Registries of Shipping - Foreign Trade (1787 - 1802) Nat. Mar. Mus. Collection.

23 ships of over 200 tons registered, with none in the first category but ten in the second.[357] The explanation is clear enough. During the war enemy privateer action thinned the ranks of the older West Indiamen. Slower and more vulnerable they were less able to defend themselves than the more modern coppered vessels. Finally, the pace of new construction in British yards during the later years more than replaced the earlier losses.

Regarding route-patterns and ports of destination, there are less signs of change during the period. This is clear from the following break-down of ships from the three selected years, according to their ports of departure from Britain and arrival in the West Indies:-[358]

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357. London Registries of Shipping - Foreign Trade (1787 - 1802). Nat. Mar. Mus. Collection.

358. Compiled from selected extracts from Lloyds Registers of 1784, 1794 and 1804.
See appendices 14, 15, 16.
Two entries falling outside the classification adopted have been omitted:-
- one ship plying between Hull and Jamaica in 1794.
- one ship plying between Newcastle and Antigua in 1804.

FROM	TO	1784		1794		1804	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
LONDON	Jamaica	12	24	15	22	21	21
	Leeward Islands	9	18	5	7	7	7
	Windward Islands	5	10	5	7	11	11
	Honduras	0	0	2	3	2	2
	Trinidad & Tobago	2	4	0	0	9	9
	West Indies generally (on speculation)	0	0	1	1	1	1
	Elsewhere (Martinique, Demerara, La Guayra)	0	0	0	0	5	5
	TOTAL	28	56	28	39	56	56
BRISTOL	Jamaica	2	4	5	7	3	3
	Leeward Islands	0	0	1	1	1	1
	Windward Islands	1	2	3	4	5	5
	Honduras	0	0	0	0	1	1
	Tobago	0	0	0	0	1	1
	TOTAL	3	6	9	12	11	11
LIVERPOOL & other North-West ports (Lancaster & Whitehaven)	Jamaica	4	8	5	7	8	8
	Leeward Islands	0	0	3	4	3	3
	Windward Islands	0	0	13	18	5	5
	Trinidad & Tobago	0	0	0	0	3	3
	West Indies generally	0	0	0	0	1	1
	TOTAL	4	8	21	29	20	20
SCOTTISH PORTS (Greenock, Glasgow & Leith)	Jamaica	3	6	4	5	6	6
	Leeward Islands	5	10	0	0	0	0
	Trinidad & Tobago	0	0	0	0	2	2
	TOTAL	8	16	4	5	8	8
IRISH PORTS (Cork, Kinsale & Dublin)	Jamaica	2	4	5	7	3	3
	Leeward Islands	4	8	0	0	1	1
	Windward Islands	1	2	1	1	0	0
	West Indies generally	1	1	2	1	1	1
	Elsewhere (Martinique)	0	0	0	0	1	1
	TOTAL	8	15	8	9	6	6

Consistency is the main feature of these returns. In contrast to the other aspects which have been considered - the size and age of the merchant ships and their place of build - there were few changes. London throughout the period continued to rank as the premier outport and her trade with Jamaica remained the most important single element. A decline in sailings from the Scottish ports in the later years was offset by a rise in the Caribbean trade of Liverpool and neighbouring ports. The volume of shipping to both the Leeward and Windward Islands showed little change, except for the number of vessels from Liverpool to the latter in 1794. The one sector which did show a sharp increase in 1804, namely the number of ships trading to Martinique, Demerara and Trinidad, can readily be explained. None of these colonies came into British possession until after 1794.

It is evident, therefore, that neither the passage of time nor the outbreak of war in 1793 substantially affected the lines of communication between the British ports and the West indian colonies. Those Customs records of the period which have survived, moreover,[359] show that the volume of shipping between Britain and the islands was not only maintained but actually increased during the first two years of the war:-

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359. P.R.O.: Customs Ledgers 17/15 to 17/24, inclusive: 'States of Navigation, commerce and revenue, 1793 - 1802'. The shipping statistics are recorded in the return: 'Account of number of vessels, including repeated voyages ... which have entered and cleared in the several British West Indian islands ...'. But note that this return appears in the Customs Ledgers 17/15 and 17/16 only. Those for the later years were lost, along with

	From/To ENGLAND				From/To IRELAND			
	1793		1794		1793		1794	
	No. of ships	000t	No. of ships	000t	No. of ships	000t	No. of ships	000t
Entries into:								
JAMAICA	150	40.9	255	69.1	17	3.0	38	6.7
LEEWARD ISLANDS	90	19.6	158	32.0	17	2.1	17	2.6
WINDWARD ISLANDS	158	32.6	247	51.9	31	4.2	20	3.1
Clearances from:								
JAMAICA	208	58.5	354	85.3	14	2.1	15	2.1
LEEWARD ISLANDS	154	31.9	153	28.8	12	1.4	8	1.0
WINDWARD ISLANDS	249	52.4	194	43.1	14	1.5	8	1.2

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Having considered the general shipping trend between Britain and her Caribbean colonies, the next step is to examine in detail the records of entries and clearances from some of the individual islands. From the large number available, those of Dominica between July and October, 1792, and of Barbados for the same period in 1801, have been chosen for purposes of comparison.[361] Thereby, any change in the movements of shippin

359, 360 (cont.) with many others, as a result of the Customs House fire of 1834.

361. P.R.O.: HO 76/2. Shipping returns of the Naval Office at Roseau, Dominica: entries and clearances, July 12 to October 10, 1792.
P.R.O.: HO 76/2. Shipping returns of the Naval Office at Bridgetown, Barbados: entries and clearances, July 1 to September 30, 1801.

to and from those islands between the beginning and end of the period under consideration, may be observed. But this is not the only reason for the choice. These returns bring to light two crucial factors which cannot be discerned from the more general statistics. One is the place trade with Britain occupied in relation to the total shipping activity of the two colonies. The other is the discovery of a characteristic pattern, established by the statistics of arrivals and departures

Between July 12th and October 10th, 1792 - that is approximately six months before the outbreak of war - James Laing, assistant naval officer at Roseau, recorded the entry of 44 merchant ships into the chief port of Dominica. Only nine had arrived from Britain:-

Date of arrival	Ship	type	tons	where from	cargo
July 13th 1792	William	ship	181	Lancaster & Cork	dry goods, plantation stores
July 13th	Robinson	ship	183	Whitehaven	plantation stores
July 13th	Queen Charlotte	brig	143	Lancaster & Cork	provisions, herring, stores
July 13th	Mary	ship	148	Liverpool	lime, coals
July 14th	Friends Adventure	sloop	103	Cork	provisions, dry goods
July 16th	Lady Augusta	brig	97	Liverpool	provisions, wine lime
August 30th	Joseph & Mary	brig	163	London	plantation & Government stores
October 4th	Hope	brig	137	Liverpool	cordage, wine, stores
October 8th	Triton	ship	180	Glasgow	porter, provision dry goods

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362. P.R.O.: HO 76/2 - Shipping returns ... Dominica, as previous page.

There are several points of interest here. The arrivals from Britain amounted to only 20% of the total shipping entering Roseau during the period. Moreover, of these nine which came over a period of three months, no less than six arrived within four days of each other.[363] This pattern was to become very characteristic of the war years which followed, indicating arrivals in convoy. During peacetime it was unusual but can be explained, in this instance, by local circumstances. Geographically, Dominica was uncomfortably situated between the two larger French islands of Guadeloupe and Martinique. Both had been in the throes of civil war intermittently since 1791 and the surrounding seas were no longer safe. It is not therefore surprising to discover British merchantmen proceeding to Dominica in convoy. The remaining three vessels among the arrivals, were clearly "runners" - reaching Dominica independently out of season to dispose of their cargoes at greatest advantage.

James Laing's record of clearances from Roseau during the period tell a similar tale.[364] Of the 58 vessels which left, thirteen were bound for England - almost the same ratio as had been the case with the entries.

363, 364. HO 76/2. See appendix 19 for the full return.

at	shi	t	dis lacement (tons)	where boun	car o
July 19th 1792	Isabella	bark	102	London	'part inward cargo from Afric not landed here'
July 21st	Hannah	ship	322	London	sugar, rum, coffee, cotton
July 27th	Thomas	snow	203	London	sugar, coffee, hides, cocoa
July 28th	John	snow	141	Liverpool	coffee, cotton cocoa
July 31st	Queen Charlotte	brig	143	Lancaster	rum, cotton, hides, fustic
July 31st	Mary	ship	148	Liverpool	sugar, rum, coffee, gum cop
July 31st	Duke of Clarence	ship	215	Bristol	sugar, rum, coffee
July 31st	Neptune	ship	198	Liverpool	sugar, rum, coffee
August 1st	Dominica Packet	ship	211	London	sugar, cotton coffee, indigo
August 10th	Favorite	brig	180	Liverpool	sugar, gum, cop
August 22nd	Mentor	ship	136	London	'part inward cargo from Afric not landed here'
August 25th	Lady Augusta	brig	97	Liverpool	sugar & coffee
October 3rd	Nysus	ship	312	London	sugar, molasses, cotton, coffee, cocoa, ginger dyewoods

Once again, concentration in sailing dates occurred. But the reason was not the same as in the case of the ships entering. It was the summer harvesting of the sugar cane and the advent of the hurricane season at the beginning of August which caused so many vessels to sail from Roseau in the last days of July. Only a few independent 'runners' - in this case the Lady Augusta and Nysus - ventured to sail out of season and during the hurricane months.

One other feature of these Dominica shipping returns deserve mention. The predominant element in the homeward cargoes to England was tropical produce, notably sugar. But there were exceptions, in this case the cargoes of the bark Isabella and ship Mentor. They had brought slaves from West Africa to the Caribbean and weighed from Dominica with some tropical produce for England. But, as the records show, much of their hold-space was already filled by African cargo destined for England - ivory, beeswax, palm oil and gum copal. Thus in the case of African slavers, their calls at British West Indies' ports did not belong to the normal inward/outward shipping pattern but represented entrepôts to their real destination, England.

When the records of entries and clearances for Dominica in 1792 are compared with similar returns for Barbados ten years later,[365] significant changes are apparent. Between July 1st and September 30th, 1801, the following merchant ships entered Bridgetown, Barbados from Britain or sailed from that port to Britain:-

365. HO 76/2. Shipping returns of the Naval Office at Bridgetown, Barbados - showing entries and clearances, July 1 to September 30, 1801. See appendix 18 for the full entry.

date	ship	type	tons	where from/to	cargo
a) ENTRIES:					
July 1801	Dominica Packet	ship	231	Liverpool	beef & other provisions
"	Benson	ship	256	Lancaster & Cork	provisions and dry goods
"	Isca	snow	157	Liverpool & Cork	provisions
"	Briton	snow	217	Bristol & Cork	stores, incl. hoops & bricks
August	Brilliant	ship	321	Greenock	wine, herrings, soap, por
September	Cicero	ship	429	Liverpool	provisions & stores
"	Barton	ship	222	Liverpool	provisions & stores
b) CLEARANCES:					
July 1801	Atlas	ship	408	London	sugar
"	Isle of Thanet	ship	341	London	sugar
"	Trusty	ship	306	Bristol	sugar
"	Betsey	snow	158	London	sugar
"	Carleton	brig	130	Liverpool	sugar, rum, ginger
"	Adventure	Ship	245	Liverpool	sugar
"	Dominica Packet	ship	231	Liverpool	sugar
August	Brilliant	ship	321	Liverpool	cotton
September	Plover	ship	297	Liverpool	sugar, cotton, coffee, indigo, fustic
"	Barton	ship	222	Liverpool	mahogany, lignum vitae, coffee, cotton, hides, cocoa
"	Cicero	ship	429	Liverpool	fustic, cotton, coffee, cocoa
"	Emerald	ship	326	London	sugar, cotton, coffee

These returns amounted to only 11% of the total inward, and 16% of the total outward traffic from the port[366] - a sharp decline from the position at Roseau in 1792. Clearly, British vessels trading to and from Barbados in 1801 occupied a reduced share.of the island's overall volume of shipping. Nor was this all. A wider discrepancy was apparent between ships entered from, and ships cleared out to Britain. Fewer ships carrying provisions, dry goods and plantation stores were reaching Barbados from Britain, to balance the greater number the colony was sending home with tropical produce.

These, then, were the salient features of seaborne trade between Britain and her West Indian colonies during the period. Most were a source of encouragement. Both by number of ships engaged and by their individual displacements, the trade was increasing. More ships were being built of a type and to a design suitable to the produce they carried. As specialization of function and emphasis on single cargoes developed, so the "established" ship increasingly replaced the "seeker", sent to the Caribbean on a speculative basis. Most important of all, the volume of shipping had not been reduced in spite of the loss of many merchantmen through enemy privateers; the importance of the trade to Britain had guaranteed their replacement by vigorous new construction.

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366. HO 76/2. Shipping returns ... Bridgetown, Barbados ... July 1 to September 30, 1801. See appendix 18 for the full statistics.

Despite these favourable developments, other inherent factors of Caribbean maritime trade came to the fore during the period, which were to prove far less satisfactory to Britain. To identify them, it is necessary to go back a number of years. Until the revolt of the Thirteen Colonies in 1775, strong trade and shipping links had been established between Britain and her North American and West Indian possessior The links had been forged upon the anvil of the English Navigation Laws. Before 1775, the basic imports required by the British West Indies, especially foodstuffs, were largely met by Britain's North American colonies, for which the latter received British manufactures in payment. Provisions also reached the British West Indies from Britain - notably beef and dairy produce from Ireland, but the bulk came from North America. Having brought food, lumber and stores to the West Indies, the vessels returned home to New England and Canada with cargoes of sugar, rum, molasses and other tropical produce. This vital trade between North America and the Caribbean was long established by 1775 and had always been regarded of the utmost necessity by the unself supporting British West Indies.[367]

By the end of the American War of Independence in 1783, the system was no longer operable. From being under British

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367. BM Add. MSS. 12404. In 1775, American vessels under Plantation registry undertook more than 75% of the entire North America to West Indies trade.

control, the operation of the North America/West Indies carrying trade had passed to ships belonging to a new and hostile nation. The results were far reaching; at one stroke, all those factors which Britain had used to tighten her trade links with the West Indies and North America were now turned against her.[368,369,370,371]

Because of their country's relative proximity to the West Indies, American shipowners held a priceless advantage over their British competitors. Freight and insurance costs were lower all round and, without the need to sail across the Atlantic the merchantmen could be built smaller and cheaper. Although often structurally inferior to the British vessels, they were more practical for the trade.[372] At a time when manning was a chronic difficulty, they carried smaller crews and undertook a far greater number of voyages annually. The picture that emerges, therefore, is of a vital trade in the hands of many small single-decked sloops and schooners, displacing 50 to 100 tons and often less.[373] Making several voyages annually, they plied to and fro, cruising at will among the Caribbean islands,

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368 to 371. See Richard Pares': 'War and Trade in the West Indies ...'; 'Merchants and Planters'; 'Yankees and Creoles' and L.F. Ragatz: 'The Fall of the Planter Class ...', as major studies of the trade before and during the period.

372. H.C. Bell: 'British commercial policy in the West Indies, 1783 - 1793.' E.H.R. xxi (1916), pp. 429 - 441.

373. H.C. Bell. op.cit., p. 435.

loading and discharging where advantage offered.[374]

Within a few years, American merchant ships were to be seen everywhere in the Caribbean, trading especially with the French and Neutral islands, where no efforts were made to restrict them. Even among the British colonies, few island governors paid much heed to exhortations from London about strict adherence to the Navigation Laws. A brisk trade grew up: ' ... The commerce among the islands is carried on by sloops and schooners ... these vessels trade to Martinique and Guadeloupe but especially to St Eustatia, where they are laden with lumber, provisions, etc., from the Americans ... '.[375]

Attempts by the British Government to deny American vessels access to her colonies failed for two fundamental reasons. Only the United States could furnish the provisions and lumber which the islands needed. Equally, the British colonies were not to be deprived of a most valuable outlet for their produce, especially rum and molasses. The two-way traffic was too vital to be smothered by the Navigation Laws and continued to grow, directly and indirectly - legally and, if necessary, illegally. Large quantities of American goods reached the British West Indies via the Neutral Islands. Governor Shirley

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374. BT 5/1, ff. 12, 13 and 20; BT 5/11, f. 3. Minutes of the Board of Trade, March - May, 1784.

375. CO 260/7: Governor Lincoln of St Vincent to Sydney, December 1, 1785.

of the Leeward Islands wrote in 1785: ' ... the old intercourse with the Dutch island of St Eustatia is again opened, and through that medium we get many American commodities.'[376] The indirect trade became so extensive, that Parliament in 1787 passed an Act prohibiting the import of flour, bread, rice and lumber from the Foreign West Indies except in times of emergency. The prohibition was flagrantly ignored by the island governors, who made use of every emergency, real or feigned, to allow American vessels entry to their ports.

The turning-point came in November 1794, when the British Government had to admit that the economy of the islands was being damaged by the restrictions upon American shipping. The key clause of Jay's Treaty, signed between Britain and the United States on November 19th, permitted the entry of American merchant ships not exceeding 70 tons displacement to the British colonies. On the other hand, in order to retain the British monopoly of carriage, restrictions were imposed upon the export of tropical produce from the islands in American vessels.[377, 378]

If the treaty of 1794 eased the supply of foodstuffs to the islands, it by no means signalled free trade between the

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376. CO 152/64: Governor Shirley to Sydney, January 11, 1785.

377, 378. See S.F. Bemis: 'Jay's Treaty ... a study in commerce and diplomacy' (Macmillan; 1923) and A.L. Burt: 'The United States, Great Britain and British North America ...' (Yale U.P.; 1940)

United States and the British West Indies. The restrictions upon tonnage and exports angered the West Indian planters and the merchants on both sides. Despite official threats, they continued to pursue unrestricted trade whenever possible. Two examples from the many available show what was happening. At an enquiry set up by the Board of Trade in 1795 to investigate the commercial situation in the Windward Islands, two Tobagan planters testified that the island's trade had fallen completely into the hands of American and neutral ships. On neighbouring Grenada, it was the same story: ' ... the trade is wholly open and chiefly in the hands of the Americans.[379] With the exception of the shipments to Britain, almost all the island's sugar export was being carried by American or neutral bottoms.[380, 381]

Comparison of shipping returns of St Vincent in 1787 with those of Grenada in 1795, confirms the trend. During the first

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379. BT 5/9. Board of Trade Minutes, September-October 1795.

380, 381. The situation on Antigua and Nevis in 1799 was very similar. Despite the treaty prohibition, the Governor of the first allowed American ships to load up to ⅓ of their cargo-space with sugar for the return voyage. Similarly, Governor Ricketts of Nevis gave permission on the basis of up to 25% of the total value of the cargo.

CO. 152/79: Governor Thompson to Portland, April, 10, 1799.
CO. 152/79: Governor Ricketts to Portland, June 11, 1799.

three months of both years, approximately the same number of merchant ships entered Georgetown, St Vincent and St George's, Grenada.[382, 383] But there the similarity ends. The 58 ships arriving at St. Vincent between January and March 1787 were divided:-

(1)	From other British West Indian islands	18
(2)	From Foreign West Indies	18
(3)	From Britain and Africa	17
(4)	From the United States	3
(5)	From British North America	2
	=	58

Only 5% of the total inward traffic was undertaken by United States' vessels:-

date of entry	ship	type	displacement	where from	cargo
February 14 1767	Colin	sloop	60 tons	Philadelphia	provisions
February 19	Christopher	ship	242	New York	bread, flour lumber, stores
February 23	Two Friends	sloop	45	New York	livestock, lumber, stores

Clearly, therefore, it was not they who were meeting St. Vincent's need for provisions. It was supplied by the arrival of an unusually large number of merchantmen from Britain during the period:-

date of entry	ship	type	displacement	where from	cargo
January, 15, 1787	Diligence	sloop	60 tons	Gweek	provisions & cod
January 20	Tom	ship	163	Lancaster & Cork	beef & pork, dry goods
January 22	St Vincent	ship	343	London	oats & stores
January 27	Sugar Cane	ship	362	London	oats, provisions, wine & herring
January 27	Zephyr	ship	377	London & Cork	provisions, fish & hoops
January 29	Lucretia	ship	231	Greenock	herring (1000 barrels)
January 31	Pan	snow	132	Bristol & Cork	provisions
February 2	Isabella	ship	262	Liverpool	provisions, wine & hoops
February 3	Backhouse	brig	174	Liverpool	provisions, cordage & Madeira
February 9	Williams	ship	247	London	provision & wine
February 12	Kingstown	brig	234	Greenock & Cork	provisions, herrin & stores
March 19	Harmony	ship	323	Newcastle	fish, oats

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Examination of the equivalent entries into St. George's, Grenada, between January and March 1795,[385] shows how the situation has completely altered. The entries were divided:-

(1)	From other British West Indian islands	17
(2)	From Foreign West Indies	16
(3)	From Britain and Africa	8
(4)	From the United States	20
(5)	From British North America	2
	=	63

382, 383, 384, 385. BT 6/188 and HO 76/1: Shipping returns - St. Vincent, January to March, 1787; and Grenada, January to March, 1795. See appendices 20 & 21 for the full returns.

While the arrivals from elsewhere in the Caribbean and from Canada showed little change, the influx of American vessels has risen dramatically from three to 20, with 17 of the latter under United States registry. Almost all carried provisions or livestock as main cargo, the remaining space in the holds being occupied by lumber, staves, shingles and other stores needed by the St Vincent plantations.

The entries from Britain were equally striking. Of the eight vessels shown as arrivals from Britain and Africa, two were slavers from Gambia and Angola and two brought wine from Madeira. From a total entry of 63 vessels during the period, only four came to the island directly from Britain:- 386

date of ent	shi	t	dis lacement	where from	c o
February 10, 1795	Fame	ship	218 tons	Greenock	plantation stores dry goods & provisions
February 12	Chatsworth	brig	132	Lancaster	plantation stores dry goods & provisions
February 20	Hobby Horse	sloop	29	London	bread, bricks & slaves
March 24	Industry	brig	91	Port Glasgow	stores, provision dry goods

Even these few hardly constituted the bulk carriage of provisions from Britain to St Vincent. Two of the ships were very small and the details of cargo for all four suggest that plantation stores and dry goods predominated over provisions.

386. HO 76/1: Shipping returns - Grenada, January to March, 1895. See appendix 21 for the full return.

The conclusions to be drawn are clear enough. The British West Indies' imports of foodstuffs were increasingly provided by the United States, as the most satisfactory supplier. In cases when the need was met from Britain - as to St Vincent in 1787 - it was neither a normal exchange nor, from the British point of view, a welcome one. Britain always preferred to bring manufactured goods and plantation stores to her West Indian colonies. Except in the special case of Irish beef and dairy produce, the shipment of perishable foodstuffs across the Atlantic was best avoided.

Within only three years, the volume of American trade with the British West Indies underwent a remarkable transformation. In 1793, 512 United States ships entered and 311 cleared from the islands' ports.[387] By 1795 - only one year after the signature of the Jay Treaty - the figures were 1,266 and 1,279 respectively.[388]

The main arteries of British West Indies trade - to and from Britain and the United States - have been considered. But there were other channels of considerable importance, which can best be expressed in a table showing the movement of shipping during the first three years of the war:-

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387. P.R.O.: Customs 17/15.

388. P.R.O.: Customs 17/17. The total for ships of all nationalities was: entries - 2,355; clearances - 2,336.

	1793				1794				1795			
	IN		OUT		IN		OUT		IN		OUT	
	ships	000 tons	ships	000 tons	ships	000 tons	ships	000 tons	ships	000 tons	ships	000 tons
• Africa	169	32.0	3	0.2	58	11.1	4	0.7	56	10.5	3	0.4
• British N. America	183	20.2	160	18.3	161	17.6	131	13.9	105	11.2	81	8.2
• Neutral Caribbean Islands (Dutch, Danish, Swedish)	588	35.1	320	22.9	263	16.9	283	21.2	408	42.4	187	13.5
• Inter-Island (British West Indies) [390]	497	37.0	647	51.5	771	58.6	772	67.9	928	73.8	1,055	86.1

[389]

As is well known, the Africa trade consisted almost entirely of the transport of negroes across the Atlantic to work on the Caribbean plantations. There was practically no return traffic. Once the slavers had disembarked their human cargoes, what remained in their holds was destined for Britain.

Vessels from Canada and Newfoundland brought mainly fish and lumber to the British West Indies, but also some provisions. Saltfish formed part of

389. Computed from entries in Customs 17/15; 17/16 and 17/17.

390. These figures refer to shipping between the islands and not to the local shipping within each island. An important category is therefore omitted: the sugar-droghers and other small craft, used for transporting produce from the plantations to the nearest port.

the staple diet of the negro population in the British colonies. On the return voyage the principal commodities carried were molasses and rum, both in great demand in Canada.[391]

During the war, the volume of trade carried out by the Neutral Islands in the Caribbean grew in importance. As war restricted the movement of the belligerents' merchant ships, so the use of the neutral ships and their ports expanded. The above figures refer only to a small section of the neutral trade. A far greater part was undertaken entirely outside the orbit of the British colonies, notably in the intercourse between the French West Indies and the neutral islands.

The most interesting part of the table concerns the local shipping within the British West Indian islands. The large number of vessels shown to be engaged in this traffic has to be qualified by their individual displacement. Their size and the amount of cargo they could carry were smaller than vessels in the other categories. On the other hand, the inter-island trade increased in volume during the period, whilst the others declined. The explanation lies in the interruption of normal communication between the islands during the war. As the convoy system developed under pressure of enemy privateering, so the practice of assembling and dispersing large

391. See G.S. Graham: 'Sea power and British North America', for details of this trade.

numbers of merchantmen at a few selected places became more frequent. War also brought food shortages to many of the islands, which could only be alleviated by obtaining supplies from better-stocked neighbours. For both these reasons, greater activity in the movement of local shipping was essential.

Examination of vessels shown in the colonies' shipping returns as being engaged in the inter-island trade, indicates that what they lacked in displacement and cargo capacity was compensated by the frequency of their voyages. In 1787, for instance, the 62-ton schooner Swift, based at Georgetown, St Vincent, made five voyages in seven weeks:-[392-4]

date	voyage and cargo
January 23rd, 1787	Entered from Grenada, in ballast
January 24th	Cleared out to Grenada, with provisions, dry goods and apparel (transshipped from the Tom, 163 tons, which had arrived at St Vincent on January 20th, from Lancaster and Cork).
February 22nd	Entered from Antigua, with oats and linen.
March 17th	Cleared out to Antigua, with butter, beef and tallow.
March 29th	Entered from Antigua, with Irish linen.

In 1795, a vessel of similar size - the sloop Commerce of 70 tons - operating from Grenada, completed seven voyages to and from four widely-separated places within nine weeks:-

date	voyage and cargo
January 7th, 1795	Entered from Demerara, with corn and lime.
January 7th	Cleared out to Barbados, with 65 new negroes.
January 22nd	Entered from Demerara, with cotton.
January 23rd	Cleared out to Laguan Island, with 110 seasoned negroes.
February 7th	Entered from Demerara, with cotton
February 10th	Cleared out to St Lucia, with cotton
March 15th	Entered from Demerara, with cotton

392. BT 6/188: Shipping returns - St Vincent, January to March 1787.
-4

The inter-island shipping performed three important functions. After the arrival of an oceanic convoy, it assisted in the distribution of the imports to the individual islands. Conversely, it helped to ensure that the exports of each island were brought to the convoy's place of departure. Moreover, local sloops and schooners proved invaluable in the task of linking up more remote areas with the normal convoy routes. The sloop Commerce's frequent shipments of cotton from Demerara to Grenada is a good example.[395]

Having examined the shipping, it is logical to continue with an assessment of the commodities carried. The trade of the British West Indies was divided into two distinct parts. The Plantation trade comprised the export of tropical produce, mainly to Britain and North America, and the import of goods and materials essential to the islands - provisions, plantation stores, dry goods and manufactures. The Entrepôt trade comprised the use of specific Free Ports in the colonies by foreign vessels, for the purpose of developing trade with the Spanish Indies and the French islands.

Sugar was by far the most important product in the Plantation trade and the major source of the islands' wealth. Every British colony, except the Bahamas, grew cane and in some it was the sole export. Together they furnished 95% of

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395. See previous table.

Britain's sugar requirements. A sharp rise in European demand during the period produced spectacular increases in sugar prices which brought a feverish prosperity to the British colonies.

Between 1774 and 1791, however, the position had been far less satisfactory. The British colonies in those years faced severe competition from the sugar production of the French West Indies. The larger islands of San Domingo, Guadeloupe and Martinique possessed greater areas for cane cultivation and more economic methods of cultivation. This was particularly so on San Domingo, where the great plain of Cul de Sac near Port-au-Prince abounded with prosperous plantations. As a result of the American War, moreover, the export of sugars from the French plantations to the United States and the neutral Caribbean islands had grown at the expense of the British colonies. Finally, these years revealed for the first time the inability of some of the British islands to keep up with the increasing demand for sugar. The older colonies in the Leewards group - Antigua, St Christopher and Nevis - and, to a certain extent, Barbados, were beginning to lose their place as major centres of sugar production.[396, 397] There were a number of reasons for this: exhaustion of the soil caused by repetitive and often wasteful cultivation; the

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396, 397. See L.J. Ragatz: 'The Fall of the Planter Class ...' and Richard Pares: 'Merchants and Planters' for details of the sugar trade.

small size and mountainous terrain of the islands, which prevented further development; the growing exodus of native labour to newer and larger plantations, as in the Guiana highlands.

This unfavourable trend was temporarily halted by political and military developments in the French West Indies. The revolts which broke out on Guadeloupe, Martinique and particularly San Domingo in 1791, were followed by a long struggle between Britain and France for their possessions in the war which followed.[398] In the process many of the French sugar plantations were destroyed and several years elapsed before large-scale production could be resumed. As a result the decade 1791 - 1801 witnessed a great revival of the British West Indies plantations, since during that period only they were in a position to satisfy the rising European demand for sugar. But the boom was short-lived. By the turn of the century the French West Indies had resumed production and new areas- notably Cuba, Guiana and Puerto Rico - emerged as major sugar exporters. The inevitable consequence was over-production; the European sugar-market became glutted and prices began to fall. In June 1798 unrefined brown muscovado was quoted on the London sugar exchange at 72/- per cwt., f.o.b.; by September 1807, it had declined to 32/9d.

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398. See chapters 1 and 2.

Britain's imports of brown muscovado from the Caribbean during the first five years of the war were as follows:-

million pounds (weight)		1793	1794	1795	1796	1797
From:	a. JAMAICA	1033.2	1154.7	1086.5	1089.2	1049.5
	b. LEEWARD ISLANDS:					
	Antigua	202.0	155.4	119.6	133.0	114.9
	Montserrat	35.1	23.2	22.1	22.0	19.9
	Nevis	57.5	39.3	47.8	48.6	50.9
	St Kitts	155.9	146.2	128.2	142.1	85.3
	Tortola (Virgin Is.)	54.9	67.3	36.4	53.4	54.4
	c. WINDWARD ISLANDS					
	Barbados	137.9	130.2	107.2	130.6	89.7
	Dominica	64.2	52.6	37.7	45.5	49.1
	Grenada	195.6	199.7	128.3	111.5	113.5
	St Vincent	134.1	128.6	57.5	39.8	67.2
	d. TOTAL BRITISH WEST INDIES	2115.3	2097.2	1871.0	1715.7	1594.2
	e. ELSEWHERE					
	Foreign West Indies	2.3	17.6	n.a.	48.4	14.8
	Conquered Islands	-	232.2	199.6	264.5	510.0

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Jamaica's predominant share of the trade is very apparent. Moreover, the volume of her sugar export was less affected by the war than that from the Lesser Antilles. The table also shows that the fall in imports from the Leeward Islands was more than offset by shipments of sugar from a new source -

399. Calculated from entries in P.R.O.: Customs 17/15 to 17/19.

the Conquered Islands.[400] Indeed, it was the produce of their plantations which had been one of the main reasons for the capture of Martinique, St Lucia and Tobago and the campaigns against Guadeloupe and San Domingo.

The organization of the Caribbean sugar trade had always been a highly speculative business. The quality of the cane crop fluctuated violently from year to year due to vagaries of climate and harvest. Other problems were created by the effect of the hurricane season and the widely differing methods of cultivation and production used in the individual islands. For these reasons much of the trade by the end of the century was operated on the "tied-ship" system. To reduce the risks, fixed arrangements were made between agent, planter and ship-master. Under them, the planter was assured of cargo-space for his produce in the vessel concerned, and the shipmaster of his vessel sailing home fully laden. The system came to be almost universally adopted in London, where the sugar commission agents dominated the West India trade.

Perhaps the best account of its operation was given by a contemporary writer: 'The course of trade is as follows - the principal British merchants are concerned with Houses in the West Indies to whom they send their ships, which carry out goods from hence and who provide cargoes of the West Indies

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400. q.v. ante.

produce to load them home; these ... are called stationed ships and seldom or ever vary their course.'[401] The writer then went on to mention the exceptions: ' ... there are many others who go to the West Indies to look for freight and are called 'seekers'. There are also ships which arrive from the coast of Africa with negroes and which want freight home'.[402] These words were written in 1775; but by 1792 the number of 'seekers', sent out to pick up a cargo of sugar by local negotiation in the planters' houses, had begun to dwindle. Wartime conditions and the inflexibility of the convoy system, higher freight and insurance rates - all tended to reduce still further the number of individual 'seekers'.

Outside the 'tied-ship' system, the problem of securing an adequate cargo for the homeward voyage was often never solved. Unrefined muscovado in barrel was a difficult bulky cargo, whose value was low in proportion to the space it occupied in the ship's hold. No merchant, having disposed of his provisions or dry goods in the West Indies and accepted a cargo of muscovado for the homeward passage, could ever hope to carry back even half the value of his outward cargo. It was this disproportion which often led to complications when attempts were made to balance the values of the inward and outward shipments. More British planters should perhaps have refined their sugars, in

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401. Quoted in B.M. Add. MSS. 38383, f. 10.

402. Quoted in B.M. Add MSS 38383, f. 10.

which case the merchants and shipowners would have got more value and less bulk. But most planters lacked the necessary capital and equipment, especially in time of war; throughout the period almost all the sugar exported to Britain was unrefined muscovado brown.

The shipment of sugar from the British West Indies started early in the year, usually in February, and continued until the end of July when the hurricane season began. It was essential, both for English and American merchant ships, that their arrival in the islands was timed to coincide with the peak harvest season between February and May.

Once their outward cargo had been discharged, the main aim of the British ships was to take on sugar and return home as quickly as possible. If they could arrive back in England in late summer or autumn, they would be ready to set out once more for the West Indies in December or January. The carriage of sugar to Britain was basically in the hands of ships which made single voyages annually. Attempts were made to send ships out twice in one year but they were rarely successful.[403] The length of the sea-voyage was partly responsible but the main cause of failure was the delays invariably experienced in the West Indies. However much the shipmaster endeavoured to

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403. In Richard Pares: 'A West India fortune' there are accounts of several such attempts, made by the Bristol firm of Pinney in the 1790's.

achieve a rapid turnover, many factors intervened to make his stay in the islands a long one. The cargo he brought had perhaps to be distributed not to one, but to several scattered islands. Loading of sugar might be delayed for weeks by a late harvest and there was often protracted haggling over sugar prices and freight charges. Worst of all, the master often found great difficulty in obtaining a full cargo or enough crew for the return voyage. All these delays were accentuated in time of war. The threat of enemy privateers drove most shipmasters to take convoy, in spite of all the additional frustrations which that system imposed.[404]

American vessels trading with the British West Indies benefited greatly from the shorter distance, which, enabled them to make more voyages annually. But it was as necessary for them to time the voyage to the cane harvest. Unless they reached the islands soon after the middle of June, they were apt to have difficulty in selling their grain and obtaining a full cargo of sugar. The American states, moreoever, exported more grain than the British West Indies could consume. A merchant vessel arriving in the Leeward Islands in October, for instance, might well find them drained of sugar but glutted with American grain and provisions.[405]

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404. See chapter 3, pp.

405. See A.P. Middleton: 'Tobacco Coast: a maritime history of Chesapeake Bay in the colonial era'. (Virginia; 1953), p. 184.

Colonial shipping returns of the period bear out the characteristics of the sugar trade which have been mentioned. The following examples illustrate the different pattern of frequency between sugar shipments to Britain and to America. The departure of a number of vessels within a few days of each other - due either to the state of the sugar harvest or, in wartime, by the necessity to proceed in convoy - is also very characteristic.

(a) Clearances from Roseau, Dominica: July to September 1792.[406]

(1) 9 ships bound for Britain, carrying sugar. 6 sailed within ten days of each other (July 21st to August 1st).

(2) 7 ships bound for the United States or British North America, carrying sugar. By contrast, their dates of departure were spread over the whole period.

(b) Clearances from Bridgetown, Barbados: July to September 1801.[407]

(1) 10 ships bound for Britain, carrying sugar. 7 sailed during the last fortnight in July and none during the hurricane season (August - September).

(2) 24 ships bound for the United States or British North America, carrying sugar, molasses or rum. Sailings spread over the whole three months, including the hurricane season.

Molasses and rum were by-products of muscovado sugar. Every sugar planter, therefore, inevitably produced certain

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406. P.R.O.: HO 76/2: Shipping returns, Dominica - July to October, 1792.

407. P.R.O.: HO 76/2: Shipping returns, Barbados - July to September, 1801.

quantities of molasses and rum and finding a market for them was almost as important to him as sugar. But there the connection ended; the export of West Indian molasses and rum followed an entirely different pattern.[408, 409]

There was much less demand for rum in Europe. Preference for other alcoholic beverages restricted its sale in Britain. In France a high tariff wall had been erected against the import of cheap rum, in order to protect the domestic cognac. By contrast, there was a heavy and increasing demand from North America. Almost every American vessel which brought provisions and lumber to the Caribbean, returned home with rum or molasses. In Canada especially, rum had become a necessity, not only to sustain the inhabitants but as an indispensable article of trade with the Indian trappers and hunters.

In the export of these commodities from the West Indies, the British Government were faced with a dilemma they utterly failed to resolve. Long before 1793, American merchants had found it more satisfactory to buy molasses in the French West Indies. Because of higher prices and greater profit, the British planters always preferred to sell the distilled product, rum. The French, on the other hand, were faced with a very limited outlet in the mother country and carried

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408, 409. See appendices 7 & 8 for statistics of the period.

therefore large stocks of surplus molasses, which they were glad to dispose of cheaply to the Americans. Because they did not insist upon selling rum only, a flourishing trade grew up.[410]

Britain had tried to stifle this trade by the Molasses Act of 1764. The entry of foreign molasses into British North America was more strictly controlled and the import of rum prohibited, except that of British West Indies' origin. However, the severity of the Act's provisions contributed to its failure; large quantities of foreign molasses reached North America illicitly. Although certified as of British colonial origin, they were actually shipped either directly from the French colonies or indirectly via Dutch St Eustatius or Spanish Monte Cristi.

During the decade before 1793, further complications affected the trade. Following the loss of the American colonies, Britain made determined efforts to bring Canada into the Navigation System as a substitute. The intention was that Canadian foodstuffs, fish and lumber should be supplied to the British West Indies, whose sugar and molasses would go to Britain. The latter would, in turn, supply her own manufactures and rum (distilled from the West Indies' molasses) to Canada, thus completing the cycle. For this

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410. Samuel Eliot Morison: 'History of the United States ... ' (Oxford; 1963), pp. 142 - 143.

scheme to be successful, it was essential that Canada ceased obtaining molasses and rum directly from the West Indies and bought from Britain instead. To this end, the Quebec Revenue Act of 1774 imposed heavy and discriminatory duties upon the import of molasses and rum into Canada by any other route.[411]

The manoeuvre had disastrous consequences. To the British planters, London merchants and Canadian shipowners alike what really mattered was direct inter-colonial trade. They rightly deplored a system which regarded Kingston and Quebec as merely ports of call in an elaborate and expensive system of single voyages.[412] Worse than this, the restrictions of the Quebec Revenue Act seriously affected almost all the islands' exports of rum to Canada, since only Jamaica among them was a major exporter of molasses.[413] The inevitable result was that Canada turned to the Dutch and French West Indies for supplying nearly all her molasses;[414] deterre by the high cost of importing British West Indian rum she preferred to manufacture it herself. By 1787 there were in Quebec alone, four distilleries with a combined capacity of 400,000 gallons. A Board of Trade committee set up in 1788

411, 412. See Professor G.S. Graham: 'British Policy in Canada, 1774 - 1791', pp. 77 - 98; and the same author's: 'Sea Power and British North America', chapter iv.

413. See appendix 7.

414. CO 42/12, f. 9.

to enquire into the trade found that the: 'importation of foreign molasses into the province of Canada is greatly increasing ... to the detriment of British rum.'[415]

Faced with such a situation, British planters and merchants demanded a reduction of duty on their imports of rum into Canada and a heavy increase upon foreign molasses. They received little comfort from the Board of Trade's final decision on the issue, declared in March 1788.[416] The import duty on rum of 6d per gallon would only be waived on vessels returning from the West Indies, which had taken Canadian provisions and lumber to the islands on the outward voyage. For three crucial reasons the Board of Trade's findings gave little help to British West Indies' interests. Foreign molasses continued to enter Canada unimpeded, and West Indian rum was given no preference in competition with the domestic rum of the Canadian distilleries. Most important of all, the very small part which Canadian provisions played in the British West Indies' total import of foodstuffs meant that the abolition of the rum duty in those few cases had little practical significance.

The outbreak of war in 1793 brought little improvement in this unsatisfactory situation to the British planter.

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415. BT. 6/76: Miscellanea - British West Indies: Leeward Islands, 1787 - 1791.

416. BT 5/5 and B.M. Add. MSS. 38391, f. 356.

With the exception of Jamaica, exports of both rum and molasses to Britain slumped and the in-bond price of molasses on the London market nearly doubled in ten years.[417] The hope that the trade in foreign molasses would suffer equally was not realized. Neutral and American vessels were not hindered from shipping French West Indian rum and molasses to the United States (and thence across the border to Canada) and to Europe. But the British planters received one unexpected consolation as a result of the war. With the arrival of large military and naval forces in the theatre their rum sales rapidly increased.

Other less important commodities in the Plantation Trade were: cotton, coffee, lumber, dyewoods, cocoa, pimento, ginger, salt and tortoiseshell. Export statistics for most of these are given in the appendices.[418] Sea-island cotton was principally grown on the Bahamas and Jamaica. Production increased during the 1790's, but it was an uncertain crop which had to be cultivated on coastal plains. It was therefore very vulnerable to enemy attack during the war. There are many contemporary accounts of sudden raids and destruction of the cotton fields and ginneries, particularly amongst the Bahamas.[419] Most of the export to Britain was handled by

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417. See L.J. Ragatz: 'The Fall of the Planter Class ... '.

418, 420, 421. See appendices 5 & 6.

419. See chapter 2, pp. 74-5.

Liverpool merchants supplying the Lancashire mills. After 1800, the cotton output of the British West Indies began to be rapidly eclipsed by the development of large-scale production in the Southern United States.

Over three quarters of all the coffee produced in the British West Indies came from Jamaica.[420] The preference for tea as a beverage in Britain limited the export market, but nevertheless production increased during the period. The trade in logwoods[421] - mahogany, lignum vitae, braziletto, Nicaragua - and dyewoods - indigo, fustic, cochineal - was both important and lucrative. Jamaica was again a leading supplier but the principal source was Honduras, where logwood settlements had existed on the Mosquito shore and around Belize since the early seventeenth century. Many of these products could not be obtained elsewhere in the British Empire, but because Honduras lay within the Spanish Indies the logwood trade was beset with political difficulties.

In return for the export of their tropical produce, the British West Indies needed to import four main groups of commodities - provisions, lumber, manufactures and plantation stores. The first was vital, since the predominant use of available land for sugar cultivation resulted in the islands' utter dependence on imported foodstuffs. That this could

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420, 421. See appendices 6&9.

be disastrous was shown during the American War of Independence when the inhabitants of several of the islands faced starvation. The same threat occurred after 1793. On Antigua, for instance, ' ... there are not on the island at this time 5,000 bushels of corn for sale ... which quantity is but ten days usual consumption of our negroes. Only three vessels in our trade with America are expected before the hurricane months, and one is stranded.'[422] French privateers swarmed off the American coast, reducing the number of ships carrying food to the islands

Although Britain - especially Ireland, with beef and butter from Cork and Kinsale - supplied some of the need, by far the greatest quantity of provisions came from the United States and, to a lesser extent, from Canada and Newfoundland. Examination of the imports of one island makes this clear:-

ST. VINCENT: Mean Annual Import of Foodstuffs, 1794 - 1805

		from Britain	from British North America	from United States (in British ships)	from United States (in American ships)
Bread & flour	000 barrels	16.3	3.4	15.1	67.0
Beef & pork	000 barrels	23.6	1.2	0.4	15.4
Dry Fish	000 quintals	2.5	110.8	0.5	28.2
Pickled fish	000 barrels	19.9	5.8	1.2	6.4

423-4

422. CO 152/74: Petition by planters of St. John's, Antigua, to Governor Edward Byam, July 12, 1793.

423. CO 260/21. Quoted by L.J. Ragatz in: 'Statistics of Caribbean History ... '

424. See appendix 10 for further details of imports of provisions.

Similar evidence is provided by the entries into Barbados between July and September 1801. Out of the total of 63 ships, 32 brought provisions, either exclusively or as main cargo. Of these, 50% had sailed from United States' ports - Alexandria, Kennebec, New Orleans, New London, Rhode Island and Wiscasset; 25% had brought fish from Newfoundland and Nova Scotia.[425] One of the results of the greater difficulty in bringing foodstuffs to the colonies was a sharp rise in prices:-

DOMINICA: Prices of Imported Foodstuffs, 1793 - 1797

		1793	1795	1797
Mess beef	shillings per barrel	148/6	198/-	330/-
Mess pork	"	165/-	214/-	330/-
Flour	"	115/6	148/6	148/6

426, 427

The islands' next most necessary import was lumber and related products, the main supplier being again the United States. The lumber itself was used extensively on the plantations in housebuilding and mill construction. Apart from Honduras there were few stands of timber remaining among the British West Indies. Extensive deforestation had been the penalty for increased utilization of land for sugar cane. Parts of the Jamaican highlands were still heavily wooded especially in the Cockpit country, but there were difficulties of access and a lack of skilled labour. Even so, there is

425. See Appendix 18 for the full return.

426, 427. CO 260/14: Governor Seaton of Dominica to Portland, May 22, 1797. CO 71/24, f. 117, enclosing a list of current prices.

evidence of extensive felling having taken place in the years after 1783.[428]

Equally important to the planters was the bulk import of shingles, staves, headings, scantling, hoops, shooks and board,[429] These articles were essential components of the sugar cask and sugar mill and were imported in large quantities from the United States and, to a lesser extent, from Britain and Canada. Without adequate supplies of them in each colony, sugar production would speedily have collapsed.

That such a situation could quickly arise is evident from what happened in Jamaica at the end of 1793. In November, Governor Williamson received a report from the Council of Assembly of a great scarcity of timber on the island. The import of staves and headings during the two previous years had hardly kept pace with rising consumption, which had reached between seven and eight million units annually. Stocks remaining on the island had fallen below half a million, and unless supplies were rapidly obtained the season's sugar production would be affected and many of the British merchantmen compelled to make the homeward voyage in ballast. Governor Williamson agreed to the Assembly's demand that the

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428. Treasury 64.72 and CO 137/84, quoted in H.C. Bell's: 'British Commercial Policy in the West Indies, 1783 - 1793.' E.H.R. xxi (1916).

429. See appendix 10 for statistics.

Jamaican ports be opened without restriction to American and neutral vessels carrying lumber. After reluctant permission had been obtained from London, the ports were opened for four months only to foreign vessels with cargoes of lumber and staves and the crisis was averted.[430]

Hitherto consideration has been limited to the Plantation Trade. But the islands were also actively engaged in another form of trade which had begun in 1766. This was the Entrepôt Trade, carried out under a system which admitted foreign vessels into specified Free Ports in the British West Indies. The system had a double purpose: to obtain the produce of the Spanish and French Caribbean possessions and to open markets for British manufactures within them. During the American War of Independence the trade suffered severely, but a revival began in 1784.[431]

That year Pitt created a new Committee of Trade which ultimately became the Board of Trade. It was due to its work under the chairmanship of Lord Hawkesbury, who was convinced of the importance of the system, that the free ports were re-established and maintained through the critical years of the French wars. Many British merchants and planters

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430. CO 137/92: Governor Williamson to Dundas, November 18, 1793 et seq.

431. The subject is treated in detail in Frances Armytage's work: 'The Free Port system in the West Indies. A study in commercial policy, 1766 - 1822'. (London; 1953).

opposed the system through fear of competition. Others realized its value. In 1786, a group of Grenada merchants and planters told the Governor: ' ... trade with the Spanish colonies is very extensive and beneficial ... slaves and English manufactures are in great demand ... in return their merchants pay cash and supply our plantations with cattle, mules etc. ... carried out in Spanish bottoms.'[432]

After 1787, the British Government began to turn away from using the free ports as an attempt to erode French colonial trade and concentrated upon intercourse with the Spanish possessions. Two new free ports were opened with easy access to them - St. George's in Grenada and New Providence in the Bahamas.[433] The range of British goods for export through the free ports was extended and, for the first time, those articles which could be imported from the Spanish colonies were enumerated.[434] Moreoever, in order to exclude American vessels from the free ports, entry was limited to those not exceeding seventy tons from ' ... colonies or plantations in America belonging to ... a foreign European state'.[435]

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432. BT 6/75: Letter to Governor Lucas of Grenada, June 8, 1786

433. By the Free Port Act of 1787.

434. = wool, cotton, indigo, cochineal, drugs, logwood, fustic, hides and skins, tallow, furs, tortoiseshell, mahogany and livestock.

435. Quoted in BT 5/16: Minutes of the Board of Trade, April 1787.

By the outbreak of war in 1793, the Entrepôt Trade had reached maturity. Two years before, a contemporary source estimated that ⅔ of the shipping entering Kingston, Jamaica, were so engaged[436] and the number of foreign vessels using that port rose from 250 in 1784 to 373 in 1792.[437] Similarly, the influx of foreign merchantmen into all the Caribbean Free Ports more than doubled between 1787 and 1792.[438]

Naturally, the war with France brought all intercourse between her Caribbean possessions and the Free Ports to an abrupt end. The change is very apparent from a study of the entries and clearances of foreign vessels to and from the free port of Roseau, Dominica between July 1792 and December 1793[439]- until the outbreak of war, the main entrepôt for trade with the French islands. Similarly, Dutch vessels were excluded from the Free Ports as soon as Holland became an ally of France in July 1795.[440]

It might be thought that the same fate befell Spanish merchant ships trading with the Free Ports, after the Anglo-Spanish declaration of war in October 1796. But this was not

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436. BT 6/76: Customs memorial, May 4, 1790.

437. See statistics in P.R.O. Customs 17/14 and 17/17.

438. BT 1/13, f. 102: 'Account of British and Foreign Vessels.. The actual figures were 405 (1787); and an average of 850 for the years - 1788 to 1792.

439, 440. HO 76/2: Shipping returns of Roseau, Dominica. See appendix 19 for the full statistics.

so. Although at first it appeared impossible to allow enemy vessels entry into British West Indies' ports in time of war, greater issues were in fact at stake. The British Government's main object in the Caribbean trade war was not to sever trade with the enemy, but divert it to her advantage. To this end, it was essential that access to the Spanish Indies' market be kept open for herself, but closed to France. As the war progressed the Spanish colonies, without effective naval support, began to suffer from the interruption of their normal imports of dry goods and manufactures. Similarly, the British colonies' need for Spanish bullion and livestock increased, particularly in order to succour the large amphibious expeditions operating in the theatre.

To safeguard the trade, the British Government authorised that Spanish vessels trading with the Free Ports be provided with special licences by the governors of the islands concerned.[441] Station warships were ordered not to detain such ships. There was widespread resentment in the Navy at the loss of prize-money and although many of the licenced ships were unmolested, there were many instances of unlawful seizure by disgruntled commanders. In 1799, for example, merchants of Nassau, Bahamas, complained three times that British

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441. BT 5/10, 5/11 and 5/15: Minutes of the Board of Trade - June 21 and November 11, 1797; August 7, October 21 and November 9, 1799.

cruisers were interfering in their trade with the Spanish colonies. That year, the scale of seizures became sufficiently serious for the Board of Trade to make official complaint to the Admiralty, without obtaining much redress.

The licencing of Spanish vessels in the Free Port trade did not become properly organized until after the capture of Trinidad in 1797, when San Josef (Port-of-Spain) was declared a free port within the system.[442] For some time afterwards, while the rest of the British West Indies remained closed to Spanish commerce, Trinidad was the sole licensing authority, but gradually in 1798 the system was extended to Jamaica and the Bahamas.[443]

The importance of the Free Port trade with the Spanish Indies during the war years should not be exaggerated. Reliable statistics are lacking, but at least as regards the flow of raw materials into the Free Ports, the system was never very successful. The main items were logwood, dyestuffs, cotton and livestock.[444] With the exception of the first, more adequate supplies came from North America and the East

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442, 443. BT 5/10, 5/11, and 5/15: Minutes of the Board of Trade - June 21 and November 11, 1797; August 7, October 21 and November 9, 1799.

444. BT 5/8: Minutes of the Board of Trade - February 9, 1793. Barbados agent, John Braithwaite, to Lord Hawkesbury on the importance of the Spanish logwood trade: ' ... the import from the Spanish Main of the following species of timber - bully tree, purpleheart, greenheart, mastic, yellow saunders and locust mahogany - have always been used by British West Indian planters as essential in sugar-mill construction ... and these woods are unobtainable elsewhere in the West Indies..'

Indies than could be furnished by the Free Ports, and return for the import of British manufactures and dry goods to the Spanish Indies was better paid in bullion. On the other hand, the market as an outlet for British manufactures was of real importance. The Spanish colonies welcomed British linens and cloth, woollen goods, hardware, including agricultural implements and cooking utensils, and a great variety of other articles. Unfortunately, it was just in this sphere that there was growing competition, from the American and neutral traders. Between 1797 and 1807, American exports to the Spanish Indies greatly increased, with Cuba in particular becoming an object of their attention. The neutral entrepôts at St. Thomas and Curaçao sold enormous quantities of manufactured goods to the Spanish.

Clearly, the Entrepôt Trade was maintained with difficulty during the war. The merchantmen plying between the Spanish Main and the Free Ports were a prey both to enemy privateers and seizure by cruisers of the Jamaica station. The introduction of the licencing system did help to protect them from the latter, but by the end of the period, there was increasing competition from American and neutral vessels. Perhaps the most surprising thing was that the Free Port system survived.

CHAPTER 5

CARIBBEAN MARITIME TRADE, 1783 - 1802

Part ii: the illicit traffic and the struggle against the privateers

The inflexibility of the English Navigation Laws and the restrictions imposed on trade between the British West Indies and the United States after 1783, inevitably promoted smuggling on a large scale. It has earlier been shown how vital to both was the exchange of tropical produce for provisions, lumber and plantation stores.[445] Every attempt to prevent this free intercourse only led to its continuation illicitly. Within a few months of a trade embargo being declared at the end of 1783, the authorities in both Jamaica and the Leeward Islands became aware of widespread evasion. In November 1784, the Governor of Jamaica wrote: 'There is every reason to believe that the fraudulent importation from the United States is very considerable ... probably equal to that which is imported legally'.[446] And Governor Shirley of the Leeward Islands asserted that: ' ... a great deal of American produce is introduced into these islands by methods contrived to evade the restrictions ...'.[447]

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445. See chapter 4, pp. 185-6.

446. CO 137/85: Governor Hamilton to Lord Sydney, November 11, 1784.

447. CO 137/86: Governor Shirley to Lord Sydney, December 2, 1784.

In fact, merchants and shipmasters from ports all along the eastern United States seaboard were willing to run the risks of smuggling to the English and French islands, in return for high profits and quick gain. Charleston, South Carolina - the closest major American port to the West Indies - was heavily implicated. Her merchants had not in the past considered the Caribbean a prime market; their main interest had been the export of South Carolina rice and cotton to Europe, But in 1775, and again in 1793, they did not hesitate to capitalize on opportunities of war; and their illegal trading in the Caribbean was often shielded by complaisant customs officials and sympathetic court judges.[448]

Other American ports were as deeply involved. Large numbers of vessels from Boston, Philadelphia and New York traded illicitly with the Caribbean. At the latter port, customs officers who attempted to prosecute illegal traders, often found the courts against them; at one time the grand jury of New York City was entirely composed of merchants.[449] The most flagrant traffic, however, was carried on by the state of Rhode Island. With a long-established reputation as astute colonial traders, the merchants of Newport and Providence were adept at evading the restrictions. Moreover, their clandestine activities were facilitated by the fact Rhode Island remained semi-autonomous long after the Declaration of Independence. With

448. Carl Ubbelohde: 'The Vice-Admiralty Courts and the American Revolution ...', p. 26.

449. See next page

little fear of interruption at home, their main problem was to escape detection in the West Indies. If unable to operate under Flag of Truce commission, they resorted to more dangerous methods. Having cleared for Jamaica or another British colony, their ships relied on forged or "coloured" papers to conceal their actual voyage to an enemy port.[450]

As well as being the essential outlet for American foodstuffs and lumber, the West Indian islands were a convenient emporium for the illicit procurement of European manufactures. There was a strong stimulus for this traffic as long as the Navigation Laws continued to force trade between Europe and the British West Indies through the entrepôt of Great Britain. The holds of American merchant ships, in particular, were frequently filled with European merchandise on the return voyage from the Caribbean. Before reaching their home port, the vessels used to transfer the illicit cargo to an "experience coaster", before entering harbour to declare the remainder of the cargo in the normal way. The abundance of sheltered bays and quiet creeks on both the North American and Caribbean littoral - allied to judicious use of the hours of darkness - facilitated such operations.[451]

Another major cause of illicit trade in the Caribbean

449, 450. Carl Ubbelohde: 'The Vice-Admiralty Courts and the American Revolution ... ', p. 27 and p. 30.

451. Laurence A. Harper: 'The English Navigation Laws', p. 263.

arose out of the predicament which faced the French West Indies in time of war. Without a big enough merchant marine or an adequate fleet in the Caribbean to protect the islands, France was compelled to admit the large-scale use of neutral ships as carriers for her colonial trade. The practice began during the Seven Years War when large numbers of small Dutch vessels, operating particularly from the islands of St Eustatius and Curaçao, almost monopolised the traffic to and from the French islands. St Eustatius especially became a very important rendezvous in three respects: for the incoming North American vessels bringing foodstuffs and lumber to the French colonies; for the outgoing tropical produce of those islands; and, for the marketing of goods of European origin, especially manufactures.[452, 453].

After the outbreak of war in 1793, the French islands made every effort to keep their trade in being by continuing to rely on neutral ships as carriers. The original pretext for admitting them to their ports - the scarcity of food and consequent threat of starvation - was made on every possible occasion and often abused. Another frequent device was the use of ships under Flag of Truce commission. Ostensibly restricted to the exchange of prisoners-of-war, the system

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452, 453. See Richard Pares': 'War and Trade in the West Indies. pp. 375 et seq; and the same author's 'Yankees and Creoles', p. 60.

offered every opportunity for the undeclared shipment of badly-needed provisions. In the early months of the war neutral ships often succeeded in reaching the French islands unchecked. But after the amphibious campaigns of 1793/1794 and the British occupation of Martinique, St Lucia and Tobago, the station squadrons closely blockaded the last remaining French possessions Guadeloupe and San Domingo.[454] At this juncture their survival entirely depended upon illicit trade. In fact none of the French islands could in wartime dispense with professional smugglers - Dutch, Danish or American. Guadeloupe survived for many years by no other means.

The neutral Caribbean islands, too, played a significant part in the illicit trade. Each quarter of the Caribbean Sea possessed at least one such refuge to which the smugglers could resort. In the north, St Eustatius stood pre-eminent as the vital entrepôt of the North American and French West Indies' traffic. Nearby, the Danish islands of St Thomas and St Martin were much used by privateers, smugglers and traders to the French West Indies. St Croix, the other Danish island, was less important as a smuggling centre during the period, because, unlike St Eustatius, it had little but its own produce to offer and its trade was liable to arbitrary interference from Denmark.[455]

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454. See chapters 1 and 2, pp. 39; 81-2.

455. Richard Pares: 'The Yankees and Creoles ...', p. 61.

In the central Caribbean the Spaniards opened a Free Port at Monte Cristi, on the north coast of Hispaniola only a few miles from the border with French San Domingo. Formerly an important trade link between North America and French San Domingo, it had rather lost its importance as the Free Port system began to develop elsewhere in the Caribbean after 1763;[456] but it remained a major hide-out for smugglers and privateers. In the south, the Dutch island of Curaçao was the chief resort for professional traders and smugglers operating between the Spanish Indies and the Windward Islands.

Nor was illicit trade confined to the French colonies or the Neutral Islands. Large quantities of foreign produce reached the British market via her West Indian colonies as a result of the French, the Dutch and the Danes operating in league with unscrupulous English merchants. The trade was risky but extremely profitable. Small craft laden with sugar, rum or coffee used to run into the creek mouths of the British colonies under cover of darkness. After unloading, the goods were taken overland to the island's nearest port and later declared as being of local origin. In this way, large quantities of foreign produce were fraudulently imported into Britain at the lower rate of duty. In an attempt to end the abuse,

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456. See chapter 4, p. 215.

an Act of 1788 stipulated that sugars exported from the British plantations had to be accompanied on declaration by certificates of origin, but these were often forged.

In 1791, Governor Orde of Dominica believed that half the island's sugar export of six thousand hogsheads was really of French colonial origin: ' ... quantities are often reported as sworn to be made at certain estates when it is notorious that such estates are not making sugar at all or never make one half of the quantity certified to be their production'.[457] A similar situation existed in the Virgin Islands. Its chief port of Tortola, one of the main smuggling centres of the Caribbean, was believed to be shipping off annually four times the actual quantity of sugar made in those islands.[458] The surplus was obtained by droghers trading illicitly with the Danish islands of St Croix, St John and St Thomas. As well as trading in sugar, Tortola specialized both in the illegal import of other foreign produce for eventual shipment to Britain at the lower duty, and in receiving American provisions, lumber and other merchandise for distribution amongst the British West Indies.[459]

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457. CO 71/18: Governor Orde to Grenville, January 18 and April 16, 1791.

458. ADM 1/315: Rear-Admiral Laforey to Stephens, March 15, 1792

459. CO 71/18: Governor Orde to Grenville, May 5, 1791.

Shortly before the outbreak of war, the station admiral gave a disturbing report on the extent of illicit trading in the Leeward Islands.[460] He emphasised that, as the distance between most of the British and foreign islands was very short, smugglers could operate large numbers of small craft at many points simultaneously. It was therefore very difficult to check such trade, but he attached great importance to the squadron being equipped with as many small and fast sailing vessels as possible. Rear Admiral Laforey then went on to describe the situation on each island. St Kitts received many of its supplies, principally by sugar drogher, from St. Eustatius '... the passage between which is not more than three leagues'.[461] Montserrat was on the direct trade route for vessels linking the French, Danish and Dutch islands. Anguilla drew all its provisions from St. Martin, ' ... between which there is but a narrow channel'. Tortola, as has been shown, took large quantities of sugar and American provisions from the Danish islands, and both Dominica and St Vincent carried on much the same trade with Guadeloupe and, in the early months of the war, with Martinique. In every case, as Laforey did not fail to emphasise, the trade was entirely illicit.[462]

As the war progressed there was plentiful evidence of

460, 461, 462. ADM 1/315: Rear-Admiral Laforey to Stephens, March, 15, 1792.

illegal trafficking between the neutral islands and the enemy. In November 1794, it was reported from Jamaica that quantities of ammunition and provisions were reaching the French garrisons at Port-au-Prince and along the south coast of San Domingo, through neutral vessels sailing from the Danish West Indies and North America. At the same time, as many as twenty Dutch merchantmen had been observed at anchor in Curaçao harbour, loading cargoes for enemy ports in San Domingo.[463] Two years later, the commander-in-chief of the Leewards station, Rear-Admiral Harvey, included in a report to the Admiralty a list of nineteen merchantmen which had been detained by his squadron during one month alone. All were flying neutral colours but had been stopped on suspicion of carrying French or Dutch property aboard. The vessels were bound for a number of different ports - Surinam, St Thomas, Cayenne, Boston - a clear indication of the extent of the illicit trade.[464]

In the earlier Anglo-French wars of the century, the enemy's main weapon had been the despatch of frequent raiding squadrons to the Caribbean.[465] But it was a feature of the Revolutionary War how few French warships larger than a frigate operated there. Without the squadrons available in 1793,

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463. CO 137/94: Governor Williamson of Jamaica to the Duke of Portland, November 14, 1794.

464. ADM 1/319: Rear-Admiral Harvey to Nepean, September 13, 1796. The period in question was from July 20 to August 20, 1796.

465. See next page.

France relied heavily upon the strategy of "guerre de course", and unquestionably the chief danger to British seaborne trade in the Caribbean came from enemy privateers. From the outbreak of war until the Peace of Amiens in 1802, they inflicted heavy losses upon merchantmen and seriously disrupted the normal course of trade. When the privateers and Caribbean bases belonging to the Dutch and Spaniards were added to the ranks of the enemy in 1795/6, the danger increased.

Who were the privateers; how and where did they operate? Why, in particular, were they able to damage British Caribbean trade more severely than squadrons of heavier warships had in the past?

Immediately before the declaration of war in 1793, the French Convention authorized the fitting out and arming of merchant ships to cruise against the enemy. A decree of January 31st promised every assistance to privateers; as soon as it was sanctioned, special couriers were despatched post-haste bearing the instructions to the French seaports.[466]

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465. For instance, - in the 1739 - 1748 War: Caylus, L'Etanduère Conflans and Macnémara (1745 - 1746); de la Motte (1747)
- in the Seven Years War: de Salvert (1756); Beauffremont, Kersaint (1757); La Clue (1758); Bompar (1759); Blénac (1762)
- in the American War of Independence: d'Estaing (1778); de Grasse and Lamotte-Picquet (1779); Guichen (1780); de Grasse (1781 - 1782).

466. See Appendix 22 , for the decree in full.

One clause of the decree emphasised the Convention's determination to wage a vigorous "guerre de course": 'Le ministre de la Marine pour accélérer les armements en course, s'ils ont lieu, délivrera des lettres de marque ou permissions en blanc d'armer en guerre, et courir sur les ennemis de la République[467]'.

It is not known how many letters of marque were first issued, nor how many French privateers operated in the Caribbean during the early months. But it was certainly a large number to judge by the damage they inflicted. Between February and May 1793 more than seventy British, Dutch and Spanish merchantmen were captured by French privateers based on Guadeloupe, Martinique and St Lucia.[468] Two years later, those operating from Guadeloupe alone were described as being: ' ... numerous almost beyond credibility'.[469] By 1795/1796, much greater numbers of privateers were being used, as the serious situation which arose at Jamaica testifies. "The Royal Gazette" of Kingston published in January 1796 a list of 159 merchant ships, bound to and from Jamaica, which had been taken during 1795.[470] Many of these were small local brigs and schooners; but there were also a large number of merchantmen on oceanic passage to

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467. See Appendix 22 , article 2, for the decree in full.

468. Gomer Williams: 'History of the Liverpool Privateers ...' (Heinemann; 1897), p. 312.

469. Ralfe: 'The Naval Biography of Great Britain ...' (London; 1828), vol. I, pp. 237 - 238 (on Laforey).

470. Listed in full in appendix 23 .

and from England carrying valuable cargoes, and, most serious of all, three Post Office packets with important mails.

Such losses produced a storm of complaint and criticism from Jamaica merchants and planters, which reached London in the early part of 1796. The following are only a selection of what was said: 'Our coasts are blockaded by privateers, nothing escapes ... every day announces a ship captured by these marauders ... they come into our very harbours';[471] ' ... the coast is become so full of privateers, ... the shippers refuse to send their goods on board';[472] ' ... at present every part of the islands swarm with privateers of every description, from four swivels to sixteen guns and full of men and small arms, who often attack in full daylight'.[473]

After two unsuccessful squadron raids in 1794 and 1795,[474] France made no further attempts to despatch ships-of-the-line to the Caribbean, or even to reinforce the dwindling number of frigates stationed there. By June 1797, French warship strength in the Lesser Antilles had declined to one frigate and two

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471. The Spencer Papers (N.R.S.) vol. I, p. 247: Charles Mitchel to Dundas, January 30, 1796.

472. Ibid. p. 249: Captain Dawkins Carr of the Jupiter to Spencer, January 30, 1796.

473. Ibid. pp. 254 - 255: Unknown correspondents to Spencer, in letters dated January 26 and February 12, 1796.

474. The first in June 1794; the second in January 1795 - both against the Leeward Islands. See chapter 1, pp. 32-4, 42-3 for details.

corvettes;[475] eight months later the last surviving frigate was laid up at Pointe à Pitre, Guadeloupe.[476] Thereafter all remaining naval officers and crew were gradually transferred to privateers, to supplement the local manpower.[477] It was the same situation on San Domingo, where the enemy's naval force had by 1797 been reduced to a handful of frigates and corvettes, stationed at Cap François. Henceforth, enemy offensive strategy was entirely based on the use of numerous privateer

Had the attack on British trade in the Caribbean been conducted by French privateers alone or been limited to their operating from their own bases, the situation, although serious enough, might possibly have been contained. But it was greatly worsened on account of the sympathy shown to the privateers by the Neutral Islands and the United States and by the entry of Holland and Spain into the War in 1795/6. Without these developments French privateering might well have collapsed.

Pursuing a cardinal principle of maritime strategy, which argued that an enemy might be destroyed by the occupation of her colonies and thus their ports and bases, the British naval and military forces had by the middle of 1794 gone far towards achieving their objectives. The campaign in San Domingo,

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475. ADM 1/320: Harvey to Nepean, June 22, 1794.

476. La Pensée, 28.

477. ADM 1/321: Harvey to Nepean, February 9, 1798.

the conquest of Martinique, St Lucia, Tobago and the temporary occupation of Guadeloupe seriously weakened the French privateer With vessels predominantly small in size and strictly limited in range and endurance, they needed safe anchorages close to their cruising areas, if they were to operate at all. Yet they did survive and indeed grew more numerous. If Britain thought she could destroy French privateering in the West Indies by occupying her colonies, she failed to take into sufficient account the vital fact that, when pressed, the enemy could fall back on other resources to hand.

As alternative operational bases, as nurseries for crew to man their privateers, as furnishers of provisions and naval stores, the French found many of the neutral Caribbean islands extremely useful. Those belonging to Denmark and Sweden were particularly helpful. For instance, Admiral Jervis in September 1794[478] warned the Admiralty of what was happening on the small Swedish-held island of St Bartholomew. In defiance of the squadron, the Governor there was giving: ' ... open and disgraceful encouragement to freebooters and privateers ... which was of the most dangerous import to the trade and navigation of the Antilles'.[479] He reported that the enemy's privateers were being supplied with flour and arms by Swedish

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478. ADM 1/316: Jervis to Stephens, September 8, 1794.

479, 480. ADM 1/316: Jervis to Stephens, September 8, 1794.

and American ships, which he had no means of preventing. The same sort of collaboration was reported from the Danish possession of St Thomas, off Puerto Rico.[480] Three months after this, Jervis' successor to the Leewards command, Vice-Admiral Caldwell, condemned the Swedes as being ' ... more hostile than an open enemy'.[481] At the same time, Lloyd's Committee in London heard from the master of a captured brig that five French privateers were permanently based on and operating from St. Thomas.[482]

Another way in which the neutral islands helped the privateers followed as a direct result of the British occupation or close blockade of the French colonies. With their ships thus bottled up in harbour by the blockade, large numbers of French seamen were idle. It was not long before they were shipped across to the neutral islands, to form a vital nucleus for manning the privateers. In January 1795, the ports of St Bartholomew and St Thomas were described as swarming with Frenchmen ready to serve aboard the first privateer which entered harbour.[483] Admiral Caldwell quoted a very typical example of what was taking place. The previous December one

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479, 480. ADM 1/316: Jervis to Stephens, September 8, 1794.

481. ADM 1/317: Caldwell to Stephens, January 3, 1795.

482. ADM 1/3992: Thomas Tayler, master of Lloyd's Committee, London, to Stephens, December 2, 1794 - enclosing a report from the vessel Maria from St. Lucia.

483. ADM 1/317: Caldwell to Stephens, January 3, 1795 - quoting several instances.

of his sloops had stopped a Swedish brig coming out of Pointe à Pitre, Guadeloupe, where she had been secretly armed and fitted out as a privateer. Four French naval officers were found on board, and it was clearly the intention that after reaching St Bartholomew she should be manned by French seamen and begin operating as a privateer. The Swedish captain refused to admit the evidence, maintaining that he had purchased the brig by order of the Governor of St Bartholomew for use on that island and that he must be allowed to proceed. The vessel's papers as a neutral were in order and in the circumstances she could not be prevented from doing so.[484] The incident exactly describes how easily the enemy could make use of neutrals to further their privateering activities, which could only be interrupted at the risk of serious political repercussions.

Nor did the co-operation of the neutral islands end with the provisioning and manning of the privateers. From the same islands came reports of the enemy being allowed to dispose of captured prizes in their harbours, without the authorities even waiting for a form of condemnation.[485] The President of the Virgin Islands early in 1795 cited instances of men from captured British merchantmen being imprisoned on St Bartholomew.[486] Other reports told of the French sending British prisoners taken

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484. ADM 1/317: Caldwell to Stephens, December 18, 1794 - enclosing the log of the sloop Inspector.

485, 486, 487. ADM 1/317: Caldwell to Stephens, January 30, 1795

by their privateers to the island of St. Thomas and elsewhere for exchange.[487] Further south, the Dutch island of Curaçao established a reputation during the war as a place where the privateers might take their prizes and dispose of the crews.[488]

From the neutral United States also came support for the privateers. The reason lay partly in the alliance forged with France during the course of the American War of Independence more valid during the period was the commercial profit to be gained from capturing British merchantmen. There were numerous cases of vessels being fitted out as privateers in North American ports under French colours but manned chiefly by Americans.[489,490] In January 1795, Lloyd's agent in New York reported that there were six French privateers in the harbour and several British West Indiamen which they had captured, alongside.[491] Charleston in South Carolina, already noted as a major smuggling centre, was equally known as a haven for fitting out and victualling enemy privateers.[492]

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487. ADM 1/317: Caldwell to Stephens, January 30, 1795.

488. ADM 1/3992: Admiralty in-letters from Lloyds. Bennett & Co., (Lloyd's Committee) to Nepean, July 8, 1797 - re the ship Mary.

489. Gwynne Williams: 'The Liverpool Privateers ...', p. 311.

490, 491. ADM 1/3992: Lloyd's Committee to the Admiralty, February 28, 1794 - re the capture of the John and Elizabeth.

492. ADM 1/246. William Parker to Nepean, June 29, 1795.

But the main external benefit to the privateers came after the entry of Holland and Spain into the war. Not only were their privateers added to the ranks of the enemy. At one stroke a great number of ports, harbours and inlets on the coasts of Cuba, Hispaniola, Puerto Rico, Trinidad and Curaçao were thrown open to the French. This was of immense strategic importance. Deprived of almost all their colonial bases, they were at once furnished with others just as good. The use of the Spanish colonial ports after October 1796 was particularly important. Along the long southern coastline of Cuba, such bases were ideal for preying upon the trade proceeding from Jamaica homeward via the Gulf of Florida. The ports of Puerto Rico and eastern Hispaniola were well placed for attacking the local traffic amongst the Leeward Islands. In the south, Spanish Trinidad was equally suitable for raiding, northwards against the Windward Islands and eastwards along the coast of Guiana. By 1802, it has been estimated that there were between two and three hundred French privateers alone operating from Spanish ports in the Caribbean.[493]

Geographical features peculiar to the area favoured privateering. The Caribbean had always supported the predator rather than his victim. An abundance of uninhabited islands

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493. Lucy Horsfall: 'The West India Trade', pp. 147 - 148. (chapter in 'The Trade Winds ...'; edited by C.N. Parkinson).

and secluded harbours provided inaccessible bases; narrow sea-passages amid dangerous reefs made it difficult for vessels of size to locate and surprise the privateers. Tropical fish, fruit and other food in plenty allowed the enemy to be self-supporting in remote areas and, even in the British colonies, the local populace were inured to smuggling and often in sympath with the privateers. Throughout the period, the margin between privateering and piracy was always hard to define. Even regularly-commissioned French and Spanish vessels had been known to turn pirate, being under little restraint from their distant governments.[494] Most notorious of all were the picaroo privateers of the San Domingo coast. Using small coastal craft propelled by oars and crammed with negroes, these native pirates preyed on the merchantmen of every nation.[495] After Toussaint l'Ouverture had overrun San Domingo in 1798, the picaroons established a reign of terror off its coasts.[496]

The types of vessels they used, their armament and crews and the skill with which they were handled, also brought advantage to the privateers. The enemy's proficiency here made it possible for their privateers to elude, outsail, and sometimes even destroy, the larger British warships sent against them. Not until late in the period, despite every effort by the statio

494, 495. G.W. Allen: 'Our Navy and the West India pirates.' (Salem; 1929), pp. 2 - 3.

496. See chapter 2, pp. 113-4.

commanders, were captures made by the cruisers evidence of their beginning to gain the upper hand.

The principal characteristics of the privateers were their small size and fast sailing qualities; their rapid and inexpensive construction in local yards; the excellence of their design according to the conditions of the area; finally, their heavy armament and complement in relation to displacement. The journals of the station admirals contain many accounts of the privateers' ability to escape capture by virtue of superior speed or sailing qualities.[497] In point of naval architecture, their design was often much admired, as, for example, when Admiral Hyde Parker described two recently-captured privateers[498] as being: ' ... such remarkable fine vessels and fast sailers .. that I shall survey them for H.M. service'.[499] During the American War of Independence, France had gained first-hand knowledge of the excellence of American naval design in the smaller types of vessels. As a result, many of her later privateers were built to incorporate the speed and manoeuvrability of the Baltimore clippers and Virginia pilot-cutters.

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497. The qualities of American sailing ships of the period are well described in three works by Howard I. Chapelle: 'The History of American sailing ships ... ' (Putnam; 1936); 'The Baltimore clipper; its origin and development' (Salem; 1930); and 'American pilot-baots' (New Hampshire; 1934).

498. La Magicienne, 16 and Le Bienvenu, 14.

499. ADM 1/248: Hyde Parker to the Admiralty, March 12, 1798.

The versatility of the enemy privateers may be appreciated by an examination of some of those which operated during the period. For instance, between September 12th 1796 and November 10th 1798, 91 enemy privateers - French, Spanish and Dutch - were captured on the Leeward Islands station.[500] A break-down by nationality, type and armament gives the following results:-

1. TABLE OF PRIVATEERS CAPTURED ON THE THE LEEWARDS STATION, 1796 - 1798

Number of Vessels

(a) By Nationality	French	Spanish	Dutch	Prizes	Unspecified	Total
	71	6	2	12	0	= 91

(b) By Type	Schooners	Sloops	Brigantines	Brigs	Cutters	Unspecified	Total
	34	14	1	13	6	23	= 91

(c) By Armament	with 2 guns	with 4 guns	with 6 guns	with 8 guns	with 10 guns	with 12 guns
	8	15	13	12	10	5

	with 14 guns	with 16 guns	with 18 guns	Unspecified	Total
	7	1	3	17	= 91

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500. Compiled from Rear-Admiral Harvey's despatches to Admiralty, September 1796 to December 1798. (ADM 1/319 to 1/321).

The table demonstrates the preponderance of French privateers operating in the Leeward Islands. A remarkable feature, also, is the fact that in spite of their limited size and displacement, nearly one-third of the privateers were armed with ten guns or more.

By comparison, the record of privateers captured on the Jamaica station over a shorter period - April 1797 to May 1798 - yields the following results:-

2. TABLE OF PRIVATEERS CAPTURED ON THE JAMAICA STATION, April 1797 - May 1798

Number of Vessels

(a) By Nationality	French	Spanish	Dutch	Prizes	Unspecified	Total
	15	8	0	0	24	= 47

(b) By Type	Ships	Schooners	Brigs	Sloops	Cutters
	1	20	4	1	0

	Gunboats	Armed Barges	Rowboats	Unspecified	Total
	1	3	15	2	= 47

(c) By Armament	Swivels & musquetoons	with 2 guns	with 3 guns	with 4 guns	with 6 guns	with 8 guns	with 9 guns
	18	2	1	0	3	1	1

	with 10	with 12	with 14	with 16	with 18	Unspecified	Total
	3	1	1	2	0	14	= 47

The analysis reveals how widely the enemy's privateering strategy varied according to area. Both stations, indeed, had to contend with privateers in the open sea, but the Jamaica command faced an additional hazard in coastal waters. Not only off the Jamaica coast, but in the Gulf of Gonaive and the Mole, San Domingo, and in the restricted channels through the Bahamas, the enemy appeared in force with small gunboats, armed barges and row-boats. Shallow of draught, heavily crewed and armed with swivels or sometimes a crude sort of howitzer in the bows, these craft used to thrust out from the coastal inlets to attack passing merchantmen and retire with their prey, before any retaliation could be effected. In this way, a heavy toll was taken of the costal trade, particularly of the small sugar droghers carrying the produce of the plantations to the assembly ports. Many of the coastal privateers, especially those operating off San Domingo, were neither French nor Spanish but picaroor

That these types of craft caused considerable damage to the trade is evident from the contemporary accounts. Twice in the course of the San Domingo campaign, in 1795 and again in 1797, merchant ships arriving off that coast from Jamaica and

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501. Compiled from Rear-Admiral Harvey's despatches to the Admiralty, 1796 - 1798, in ADM 1/319, 1/320 and 1/321.

502. Compiled from Vice-Admiral Hyde Parker's despatches to the Admiralty, June 13, October 8, 1797 and March 12, 1798, in ADM 1/248. See pp. 255/6 for the full list of captures.

North America were seriously harassed.[503, 504] The worst attacks took place around an area to the south of the Mole St Nicolas, known as the Platform. Here picaroon row-boats and barges lay in wait for unsuspecting merchantmen as they rounded the headland before coming into harbour.[505] Even after the Mole had become a permanent base for the squadron's warships, the Platform continued to claim its victims.[506]

Further south in the enclosed waters of the Gulf of Gonaive and the Bight of Leogane, small French and picaroon privateers took full advantage of local conditions. In the Gulf, the wind used often to drop unexpectedly, leaving merchantmen bacalmed and vulnerable; in the Bight, navigation was difficult and ships proceeding to Port-au-Prince had to follow a narrow channel close inshore.[507] Just such a situation occurred on January 1st, 1800, when the schooner Experiment escorting a convoy of four merchantmen was attacked off Gonaive

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503. ADM 1/244: Ford to Admiralty, May 3, 1795.

504, ADM 1/248: Hyde Parker to Admiralty, August 26, 1797.

505. ADM 1/246: William Parker to Admiralty, June 29, 1795. In this despatch, Parker also pointed out to the Admiralty that the only vessel available from the squadron to act as guard-ship at the Mole, was the poorly-armed Dispatch, quite incapable of: ' ... chequing the rowboats from the Platform boarding vessels coming into the Mole'.

506. ADM 1/248: Hyde Parker to Admiralty, October 8, 1797.

507. Ibid: same to same, March 13, 1798.

Island. In a flat calm, ten picaroon barges manned by between four and five hundred pirates put out from the shore and began rowing towards them. Unable to go to the assistance of her charges, Experiment managed to sink three of the nearest enemy craft but two of the merchantmen were seized.[508]

The Spaniards, too, were adopting the same methods: ' ... our coastal trade is being attacked by the enemy who have taken to building at San Iago de Cuba row-boats upon the principle of launches that carry from thirty to forty men, armed with one heavy gun and rowed by twelve to eighteen oars. These skulk under the points of bays and are a very great annoyance to the trade. From their rowing and being able to unship their oars, they cannot easily be seen by our cruizers and by their quick movement from place to place it is impossible to destroy them even although we have six vessels now cruizing about the island (Jamaica). They are under Spanish colours but mostly manned with Frenchmen ... these vessels certainly do a great deal of mischief.'[509]

In other areas as well, the enemy found the use of shallow-draught vessels close inshore profitable. They infested the Grand Bahama Bank, as Captain Hardy of H.M.S. Squirrel pointed out to Admiral Hyde Parker: ' ... it is impossible to

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508. G.W. Allen: 'Our Navy and the West India pirates ...' , pp. 2 - 3.

509. Spencer Papers (N.R.S.), vol. III, pp. 283 - 284: Hyde Parker to Spencer, February 24, 1800.

protect the coasting trade among the Bahama islands, without a vessel of force of a small draft of water in order to go across the Banks ...'.[510] In the shallow Bay of Honduras and off the Guiana coast similar craft were to be found. In the estuary of the Orinoco the Spaniards constructed a number of shallow-draught "lanchas", specially designed to operate off the river mouths and attack merchant ships while they waited for the tide to carry them over the sandbars. By 1802, over £200,000 worth of damage to the Guiana coasting trade had been caused in this way.[511]

Certain factors dictated where the enemy privateers most often congregated for their attacks upon trade. On the Leewards station the most important was the geographical position of the British colonies - particularly Barbados - as first landfall for the incoming oceanic trade. Thus the wide area of sea to windward of the Antilles chain was a favourite hunting-ground for the privateers. All merchant ships coming into the islands from the Atlantic, including those ultimately sailing on to Jamaica, followed predictable courses. There was very little scope for variation due to the direction of the prevailing winds and, more important, the inability at that time of establishing

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510. ADM 1/248: Hyde Parker to Admiralty, enclosing Captain Hardy's report of March 12, 1798.

511. ADM 1/327, f. 62: Seymour to the Admiralty, March 17, 1802.

longitude at sea.[512] Because of the latter, incoming ships could only be certain of making landfall by reaching the most suitable parallel of latitude and sailing along it to the required destination. Such circumstances greatly favoured the privateers; their area of search could be concentrated upon the limited areas of landfall or along the narrow tracks the trade must follow. Of course, it was just in those areas that the stations placed their cruiser patrols, but there were never sufficient warships available. Moreover, following such predictable courses did not endanger well-escorted convoys, but often proved fatal to stragglers or merchantmen sailing independently.

In July 1795, the Admiralty had to remind the station commander, Vice-Admiral Caldwell, of the vulnerability of the area to windward of Martinique, especially for merchantmen who had lost their convoy.[513] Some time later the windward approaches to Barbados became infested with privateers and Admiral Laforey was forced to increase the cruiser patrol force there at the sacrifice of other areas.[514] It was not however until after Spain's entry into the war in 1796 that the approa-

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512. For the problem of longitude at sea, see two important articles by G.W. Nockolds in the 'Proceedings of the Antiquarian Horological Society', entitled: 'Early timekeepers at sea': vol. IV (September 1963), pp. 110 - 113; vol. V (January 1964), pp. 148 - 152.

513. Spencer Papers (N.R.S.), vol. I, pp. 51 - 52: Middleton to Spencer, July 1, 1795.

ches to the southern Windward Islands suffered in this way. In fact it proved less of a problem there, since few merchantmen approached Grenada or St Vincent directly from windward, their first landfall being Barbados. As a result, Spanish and French privateers based in the Gulf of Paria, Trinidad, tended to operate more against Demerara and other parts of Guiana.[515] Their objective was the coastal traffic rather than the incoming oceanic trade.

The position of Guadeloupe as a focus of privateer activity was somewhat different. After a very temporary occupation by British military forces in 1794, it remained for eight crucial years the sole surviving French possession in the Caribbean. In size the largest of the Antilles, Guadeloupe geographically dominated the smaller British Leeward Island colonies to the north and north-west and Dominica immediately to the south. Inevitably it became a key enemy privateer base, and the seas round Guadeloupe and the neighbouring islands of Marie Galante and Désirade were always dangerous to trade. Never more so than during the critical years of 1795/1796 when: 'their privateers ... daily sallied out from the ports of the island and scarcely ever returned successless ... a considerable number of vessels, many of considerable size, were made prizes of ... '.[516]

514, 515. ADM 1/317: Laforey to Nepean, March 13, 1796.

516. James Ralfe: 'The Naval Biography of Great Britain ... ' (4 vols; 1828), vol. I, p. 237.

At that time Admiral Laforey estimated there were between twenty six and thirty privateers based on the main port of Pointe-à-Pitre, Guadeloupe, alone and their armament ranged from eight to fourteen guns each. An unknown number of others operated from the smaller harbours and from creeks.[517]

Different factors determined the location of enemy privateers on the Jamaica station. The main elements there were the long and vulnerable sailing route to and from Jamaica and the geographical position of the hostile islands of San Domingo/Hispaniola and Cuba.

The routes which ships bound to and from Jamaica had to follow, have been described in the chapter on the Convoy System,[518] The same had also to be taken by the independent "runner", the straggler and the small coasting vessel - and it was upon these that the privateers mainly preyed. During the voyage to Jamaica, the greatest danger occurred as merchantmen sailed along the south coast of San Domingo. Here many captures were made by enemy privateers operating from Aux Cayes and Jacmel.[519] Off the former, l'Ile de Vache had an evil reputation for the number of privateers lurking off its shores.

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517. ADM 1/317: Laforey to Nepean, August 6, 1795.

518. See chapter 3, pp. 150-4.

519. ADM 1/245: Ford to Admiralty, December 31, 1794.

After 1795 it became necessary for the station admiral to institute a regular cruiser patrol between Jacmel and Altavella.[520] On the homeward route from Jamaica, the early stages of the voyage were less perilous. Via the Windward Passage, greater security followed the capture early in 1794 of the Mole St Nicholas,[521] which commanded its entrance. Via the longer Florida Straits route, French privateers were less able to attack the trade because of the great distance from their bases. In fact this route presented more of a problem after 1796, when Spain's entry into the war opened up the Cuban ports to her own privateers and those of her allies.

Security for the homeward-bound trade was much less satisfactory after it had passed through the Windward Passage. The maze of channels and numerous islands of the Bahamas were an ideal area of operations for the privateers. It proved quite impossible to patrol such a large area adequately from distant bases in Jamaica and there was no suitable major anchorage in the Bahamas themselves. French and picaroon privateers operating from Jean Rabel and Port de Paix on the north coast of San Domingo and, later, Spaniards from Barracoa in Cuba and Monte Cristi in Hispaniola operated almost at will.[522]

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520. ADM 1/246: Parker to Nepean, November 3, 1795.

521. See chapter 2, pp. 78-9.

522. ADM 1/246: Parker to Admiralty, June 29, 1795.
ADM 1/248: Hyde Parker to Admiralty, August 26, 1797.

An illustration of the damage caused by the enemy in this way comes from the Post Office records. Between 1795 and 1797 six Falmouth packets were taken by privateers in the Caribbean, with serious financial consequences and delays to the mail:-

Packet	Taken by	Date	Value of cargo[523]
Queen Charlotte	Republique	April, 19th, 1795	£ 3,281 14 10
Prince William Henry	Vengeance	April 7th, 1796	£2,464 17 7
Active	Voltigueur	September 30th, 1796	£ 2,598 10 4
Princess Elizabeth	Actif, 14	February 28th, 1797	£ 4,068 1 9
Sandwich	Duguay, 18	March 10th, 1797	£ 2,073 12 4

In every case the captor was a privateer and not a man-of-war; two of the packets - Prince William Henry and Active - were taken in the Caicos Passage, a principal exit route through the Bahamas. This passage, although the most direct to England, was often avoided by merchant ships on two counts. It was the most easterly and therefore the nearest to the enemy at San Domingo; moreover, as it faced directly north-east, the winds

523. In minutes of the proceedings of the Committee of West India Merchants, London, March 24, 1794. Also in the correspondence between its chairman Mr. Beeston Long and Messrs. Chesterfield and Leicester of the General Post Office, March 15 to April 14, 1797.

were often dead against. But the packets had taken those risks in an attempt to reach England more quickly and had paid the consequences. As early as June 1795, the station commander at Jamaica had seen, ' ... the need to appoint escorts to the several packets through the Passages to the northward, where privateers look to interrupt the homeward-bound running ships...[524] He had tried to minimize the danger by despatching a sloop[525] from the Mole to cruize in the passage, but, with pressing commitments elsewhere, it was a very makeshift arrangement.

San Domingo played as important a role in determining the location of privateers on the Jamaica station as Guadeloupe did on the Leewards. The use of ports and harbours on her southern coast by privateers attacking the inward-bound trade to Jamaica, and on her northern against the Bahamas' passages, has already been described.[526] But her assistance to the privateers did not end there. From the many small harbours in the two large peninsulas jutting out westwards at Cape St Nicholas and Tiburon, armed barges, gun-vessels and row-boats played havoc with the coastal trade.[527] This was particularly so during the San Domingo campaign, when the passage of merchant

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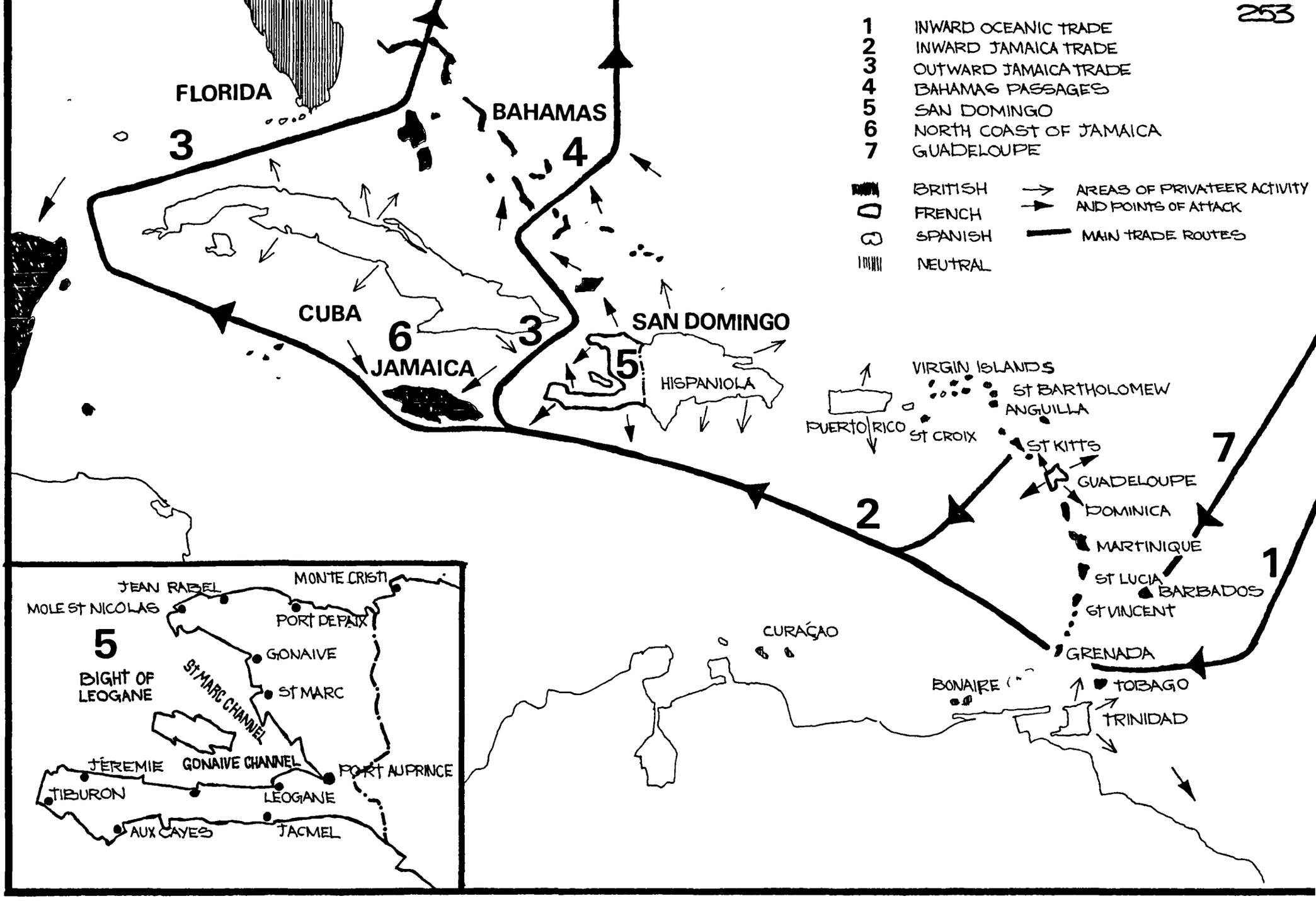
524. ADM 1/246: William Parker to Admiralty, June 29, 1795.

525. Le Serin, 16.

527. ADM 1/248: Hyde Parker to Admiralty, August 26 and October 8, 1797.

526. See chapter 3, p. 135.



MAP 9. Major Areas of Enemy Privateer Activity, 1793 : 1802

ships from Jamaica to the island was at times almost brought to a standstill by the privateers. Losses were so severe in 1795 that a deputation of Jamaica merchants trading to San Domingo wrote a joint memorandum to the station admiral, one of their complaints being that, ' ... insurance is become so high as to be almost a prohibition to the Trade'.[528]

The various activities and operational zones of the privateers may be summarised as falling into seven groups, and these are set out in the accompanying map.[529] The basis of division is primarily geographical, dictated by the limited range of the vessels used. But in some areas the line of demarcation was crossed, where more than one type of privateering was undertaken. San Domingo, for instance, harboured not only privateers operating in her coastal waters, but those which struck northwards against the Bahamas and south-westwards against the north shores of Jamaica.[530]

The divisions of privateer activity which have just been suggested show that in the Leewards command it emerged as two distinct problems: the defence of the inward-bound trade, especially to windward of the islands; and the need to reduce Guadeloupe's power as the main enemy privateer base. These conclusions are borne out by an examination of privateers captured on that station over a period of twenty-six months:-

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528. ADM 1/246: William Parker to Admiralty, June 29, 1795 - enclosing the memorandum.

529, 530. See Map 9 .

LIST OF FRENCH, SPANISH AND DUTCH PRIVATEERS CAPTURED ON THE LEEWARDS STATION : 1796 - 1798

No.	Date	Privateer	Guns	Type	Captor	Remarks
1.	September 12,1796	La Victoire	6	schooner	Zebra	
2.	September 21	Iris	6	privateer	L'Aimable	
3.	November 23	Galgo	18	Spanish brigantine	Alarm	with £80,000 aboard
4.	December 28	Maria Topaze	10	privateer	Lapwing	
5.	January 31,1797	L'Espoir	4	privateer	Lapwing	
6.	February 15	St Christopher	18	Spanish brig	Lapwing	
7.	March 7	Heureuse Catherine	6	schooner	Lapwing	
8.	March 22	(three French privateers)			Hermione	and their 12 prizes
9.	April 4	Le Poisson Volant	4	schooner	Tamar	
10.	April 6	Le Chasseur	-	privateer	L'Aimable	
11.	May 3	La Bayonaise	-	schooner	Cyane	
12.	May 18	Le Vengeur	-	privateer	Zephyr	
13.	May 22	La Jalouse	4	schooner	Tamar	
14.	May 28	La Galatée	8	schooner	Tamar	
15.	June 10	La Heureuse	2	schooner	Tamar	
16.	June 9	Louis Bonfoi	4	schooner	Lapwing	
17.	June 14	Le Poisson Volant	4	schooner	Tamar	
18.	June 23	La Barbarosse	8	schooner	Tamar	
19.	July 6	La Legere	6	schooner	Zephyr	
20.	July 8	Le Va-Tout	2	schooner	Zephyr	
21.	July 6	Le Veteran	8	schooner	Lapwing	
22.	July 7	Le Dorade	4	schooner	Lapwing	
23.	July 6	Le Batave	10	Dutch privateer	Roebuck	
24.	August 1	Le Regulus	4	privateer	Lapwing	
25.	August 4	Le Pont d'Arcot	4	privateer	Tamar	
26.	August 8	Le Renard	10	cutter	Tamar	
27.	August 10	L'Utile	14	brig	Tamar	
28.	August 15	La Cocq	6	schooner	Alexandria	
29.	September 13	L'Agréable	18	sloop	Bittern	
30.	September 28	La Sarazine	6	schooner	Scourge	
31.	December 2	Le Hazard	2	schooner	Roebuck	
32.	December 4	Le Dragon	12	schooner	Tamar)	'both fast
33.	December 7	Dix-huit de Fructidor	10	sloop	Tamar)	sailers'
34.	December 16	La Decidée	10	sloop	Alfred	
35.	January 3, 1798	La Desiree	6	schooner	Babet	
36.	January 8	La Proserpine	8	brig	Concorde	
37.	January 9	Intrigue	6	schooner	Lapwing	
38.	January 16	La Caye au Poulet	16	brig	Concorde	
39.	January 20	La Rencontre	6	sloop	Alfred	
40.	February 2	Le Battren	4	sloop	Amphitrite	
41.	February 9	La Ceres	14	sloop	Matilda	'pierced for 14 but mountin only 2'
42.	February 8	L'Espoir	8	-	Zephyr	

No.	Date	Privateer	Guns	Type	Captor	Remarks
43.	February 18	La Mutine	8	schooner	Lapwing	
44.	February 19	La Parfaite	10	-	Roebuck	
45.	February 11	Le Hardi	8	schooner	Concorde	
46.	February 13	Le Hazard	2	schooner	Concorde	
47.	March 16	La Furie	2	privateer	Hawke	
48.	March 31	Le Hardi	4	privateer	Lapwing	
49.	April 1	La Rosière	-	privateer	Concorde	
50.	April 3	La Violette	-	sloop	Amphitrite	
51.	April 6	Jeune Nantaise	-	sloop	Garland	
52.	March 29	La Vautour	10	sloop	Matilda	
53.	March 31	L'Aigle	12	brig	Matilda	
54.	April 1	Mutine	6	sloop	Requin	
55.	April 1	(not given)	14	brig	Scourge	'chased and blew up'
56.	April 2	Bran-le-Bas	8	schooner	Tamar	
57.	April 6	La Triomphe	14	brig	L'Aimable	
58.	April 8	Le Chasseur	2	schooner	Scourge	
59.	April 8	L'Espiegle	2	schooner	Scourge	
60.	May 29	L'Intrepide	10	sloop	Lapwing	
61.	May 29	L'Annibal	14	brig	Matilda	
62.	May 29	La Mort	4	schooner	Charlotte	
63.	June 13	Le Destin	4	schooner	Solebay	
64.	June 23	L'Étoile	6	sloop	Matilda	
65.	July 8	Le Mahomet	4	schooner	Hawke	
66.	July 9	De Este Ondeming	-	Dutch schooner	Charlotte	
67.	August	La Buonaparte	8	cutter)		
68.	August	L'Amazone	4	cutter)	Lapwing & Concorde	
69.	August	La Fortune	2	cutter)		
70.	August	Invariable	4	cutter)		
71.	September 8	Le Dixième Août	12	brig	Bittern	
72.	October 5	L'Intrepide	14	brig	Matilda	
73.	October 4	Le Scevola	10	sloop	Pearl	
74.	November 10	(not given)	12	Spanish schooner	Victorieuse	

531, 532, 533

531. Compiled from Rear-Admiral Harvey's dispatches in ADM 1/319, 1/320 and 1/32

532. There is a long list of French privateers taken between 1793 and 1814 in C.B. Norman's : 'The Corsairs of France...', appendix xviii, pp.429-450. But the vessels are listed by name only and there are no details of place of capture.

533. Plus 8 other privateers, whose place of capture is not recorded in the despatches:- (1) Spanish privateer La Casca, 6, captured on February 15, 1797. (2) 7 French privateers captured during November 1798 - La Guadeloupienne, 10; La Prize de Marthe, 8; La Prosperité, 8 - schooners. Le Bordelais, 6 - sloop. L'Independence, 12; & Le Quatorze Juillet, 14 -brigs. La Zombie, 8 - cutter.

If this information is plotted according to where the privateers were captured,[534] a distinct pattern emerges. Making allowance for the fact that some of the privateers were taken en route to and from their cruizing areas, the result confirms the existence of three quite separate areas of privateer activity within the command:[535]

Area A: The northern Leewards group - against which a large number of privateers, based on Spanish Puerto Rico and the neutral islands of St Thomas, St Martin, St Bartholomew and St Eustatius, operated.

Area B;; The wide arc stretching from Antigua to Martinique, dominated by French privateers based on Guadeloupe, The scale of enemy activity is apparent from the large number of captures made in this area.

Area C: The Windwards Group, an area quite different from the foregoing. Here the scale of privateering was much less, owing firstly to its distance from the French bases and, secondly, to the less numerous and less effective Spanish privateers from Trinidad, The main activity derived from the larger French privateers operating at long range from Guadeloupe and attacking the inward-bound oceanic trade as it made its landfall to eastward of Barbados. 536

Heretofore, the struggle against the privateers has been discussed mainly from the point of view of the privateers themselves. It has been suggested that the reasons for the

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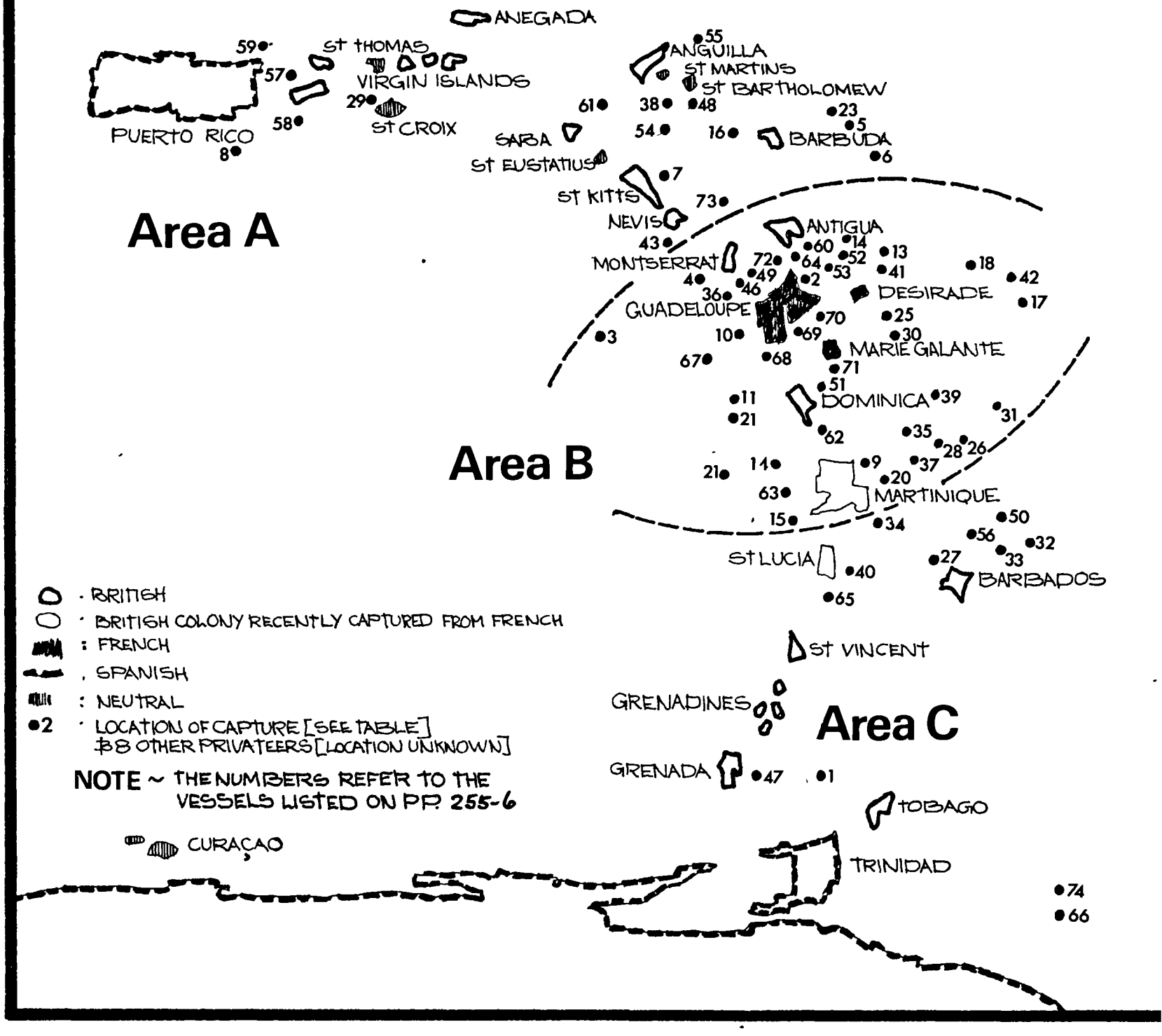
534. See Map 10 on p. 258.

535. Because of their small size and limited range, the privateers were usually confined to one area for some time. Normally they could operate in a second area, only if a base there was already assured.

536. See map 10 on p. 258.



MAP 10 Approximate Location of Enemy Privateers captured on the Leeward Islands Station September 12, 1796 to November 10, 1798

enemies' success lay in the large number of privateers operating the skill with which they were handled, and the favourable geographical circumstances which they found in the Caribbean. But another very important reason remains to be considered; namely, the inadequate means and resources provided for the British naval commands in the area, with which to fight them. Repeated again and again in their despatches to London, the station commanders throughout the period condemned the lack of small warships in their squadron, both in number and of the right type, Such deficiency was a fundamental cause of failure against the privateers.

What in fact could the station commanders do against the privateers? Six possibilities were discernible; four direct and two indirect. Within the first category fell: conquest of the enemy islands and seizure of their bases; raids and "cutting-out operations"; blockade; and sinking the privateers at sea. To each of these methods there were serious strategic objections. The first would have been decisive against the privateers, but required large numbers of troops and a series of costly amphibious operations. The second demanded a battle-fleet, which could not be provided; also, direct attack upon enemy shore-batteries meant acceptance of casualties and damage to the squadron beyond the repair capacity of the Caribbean dockyards. As regards the two latter direct methods, the past had shown that the seas were

too wide and there were too many enemy ports to ensure success.

As a result, the station commanders had to fall back upon the two indirect methods: a convoy system, and the organization of regular cruiser patrols. If the enemy could not be attacked directly, then the seaborne trade must be defended and the privateers prevented from reaching their prey. This strategy was certainly sound but here a serious dilemma arose. To ensure success, both methods had to be used simultaneously; and in either case large numbers of small warships of the right type had to be available as patrol cruisers and as convoy escorts. But it was just here that both commands were grossly unprovided for.

In the Leewards command, the difficulties began early. Vice-Admiral Caldwell found in the spring of 1795, that the few frigates he had were proving quite unsuitable for hunting privateers in the restricted waters and narrow channels of the command. Although adequately gunned, they lacked the speed and manoeuvrability for the task. Worse was the lack of numbers; at that time there were not even enough small warships to organize a proper cruiser patrol around Guadeloupe,[537] and the French privateers sailed so fast that: ' ... unless it blows so strong, the frigates cannot come up with them'.[538]

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537. ADM 1/317: Caldwell to Nepean, April 16, 1795.

538. Nat. Mar. Mus.: Caldwell Papers (CAL/115): Same to same, April 19, 1795.

A few months later, his successor, Rear-Admiral Laforey, was anxiously trying to obtain small vessels locally by every possible means.[539] But he met serious obstacles in the way. There were seldom opportunities for commandeering the types of vessel he particularly sought - brigs, sloops and schooners. When any were found in local use, it was discovered upon investigation, that they were either hired by the island authorities for local defence or owned by merchants for protection of their trade under letter of marque. Those vessels which remained and were offered to the Navy often proved quite unsuitable. A major difficulty arose through most of them being small and unarmed; no suitable cannon could be found in the royal dockyards with which to mount them. The cost of purchase and conversion was always high; at the end of 1794, two local sloops were fitted out at the Antigua yard at a cost of £ 2,100 and £ 2,300 apiece.[540] At the root of the problem lay the Admiralty's reluctance to allow overseas commands the power of purchasing ships locally to add to their squadrons. Long delays always ensued before permission to purchase or convert was granted.

Attempts were therefore made to enlist the support of the islands to contribute towards their own maritime defence against

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539. ADM 1/317: Laforey to Nepean, August 6, 1795.

540. Ibid.

the privateers. The results were disappointing. In January 1795, Caldwell asked the island legislatures: 'to fit out at the public expense ... each a copper-bottom'd vessel from sixty to one hundred and twenty tons, armed with ten to twelve guns and carrying thirty to forty men'.[541] Only Antigua furnished the type of vessel required - a ten-gun sloop, the Polly, which was immediately despatched to Guadeloupe on cruiser patrol.[542-4]. Barbados and Montserrat gave two small schooners[545] which proved useless in service and there were no other contributions.

Having found local resources inadequate, the station commander next tried to obtain some Virginia pilot-boats from the United States.[546] He had heard of their good sailing qualities, and from the dockyard point of view an added advantage lay in the fact that: ' ... only a small quantity of cordage was used in them'.[547] But his efforts were defeated by the francophile attitude of the United States at that time.

Only danger on their doorstep eventually spurred the colonies to action. In the autumn of 1795 the privateer

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541 - 544. Nat. Mar. Mus.: Caldwell Papers (CAL/108); Caldwell's Journal - January 3, 25, 26 and 28, 1795.

545. = The private schooner Lord Hawkesbury, 12, supplied by Barbados; the schooner Charles Ker, 4, supplied by Montserrat.

546, 547. Nat. Mar. Mus.: Caldwell Papers (CAL/108) - containing a retrospective report by Admiral Jervis to Stephens, April 6, 1795, after his return to England.

threat against Dominica became so alarming, that its Governor was forced to take some initiative: 'At a great expense to government I have been obliged to purchase and hire vessels and to arm some of them to cruize between Marie Galante and this island ... I have also attempted to purchase a guarda-costa from Bermuda'.[548] The latter proved unsuccessful as the vessel had already been bought by the commander-in-chief of the North American station, Rear-Admiral Murray. Laudable though these individual efforts were, the fact remained that small local craft were no match for the enemy privateers, nor could they be easily integrated into the squadron. In spite of all the difficulties, the situation began to improve in the Leeward Islands after 1796. Greater numbers of small warships of the right type arrived from England and the effectiveness and range of the cruiser patrols slowly increased. That this was the real answer to the privateers is proved by the long list of successes on the station during the period Rear-Admiral Harvey was in command.[549]

The difficulty in repulsing the privateers was equally apparent in the Jamaica command. Even before war broke out in 1793, it had been noticed how easily Virginian pilot-boats and schooners, trading illicitly between the United States and the British West Indies, had been able to outsail any vessel

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548. Spencer Papers (N.R.S.), vol. I, pp. 57 - 58: Governor Hamilton to Spencer, October 31, 1795.

549. See pp. 255-6.

the Jamaica squadron could put against them.[550] Just such material was to form the principal weapon of the privateers after the war had begun.

Unfortunately, when the Admiralty at length realised that the squadron must be equipped with a sufficient number of the right type of warship to outmatch the privateers, much valuable time had been lost. An extract from a letter written by a Jamaica merchant[551] to his London agents early in 1796, clearly demonstrates the official lethargy and muddleheadedness: 'I am just now informed that fourteen Virginia pilot-boats are arrived at Cape Nichola Mole ... what these are now to do for us I cannot tell. A few months ago they might have been serviceable on our coasts against the smaller privateers, but we have now brigs and schooners of fourteen to sixteen guns to contend with and these boats, it is said, cannot carry above six guns ... in short, some more frigates and sloops of war must be sent out'.[552, 553].

William Parker, the station admiral, had known about the proposed reinforcements for some time. The British consul-general at Virginia had informed him of his authority from the Government to purchase and send twenty-five schooners and pilot-

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550. ADM 1/244: Inglefield to the Admiralty, June 30, 1792.

551. Simon Taylor, esq.,

552, 553. Extract of a letter written to Messrs. Fisher & Hibbert by the Grantham packet, February 16, 1795, and quoted in Spencer papers, (N.R.S.), vol. I, pp. 250 - 251.

boats to the Mole and a similar number to Martinique, for the Leewards station.[554] Parker's doubts about their value were confirmed not long after they had arrived in January 1795. Swallowing his fears and aware that no further reinforcements were likely for some time, he set about arming them for cruising with six three-pounder cannon and six swivels each. But a preliminary survey showed the uselessness. Of the twenty-four vessels which had reached the Mole, (one had been captured en route), only four were found either large enough to be converted or considered as standing any chance in an encounter with enemy privateers. Parker transferred the others to the military forces operating in San Domingo; six to the artillery as gun-vessels, six to the commissariat, four to the quartermaster-general and four to the engineers.[555]

Even before this unfortunate episode, Admiral William Parker had no doubt that his squadron could only defeat the privateers if provided with commissioned Royal Navy warships despatched from England. Past experience had shown that neither local vessels nor foreign purchases, hired at great cost in time and money, were feasible alternatives. He also saw the Admiralty's failure to anticipate developments. The incident of the Virginia purchase was only one example amongst

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554. ADM 1/247: William Parker to Nepean, January 6, 1796.

555. Ibid.: Same to same, February 28, 1796.

many, in which steps to solve an earlier problem had taken so long, that the enemy had had time to place a greater one in its place.[556]

In a series of important despatches to the Admiralty during the second half of 1795, Parker defined the station's requirements. At the head was the need for at least ten more warships of the smaller type, particularly sloops and frigates.[557] Because of the demands of the San Domingo campaign, the brunt of trade protection had to be left in the hands of sloops or even smaller warships. Since ' ... San Domingo engrosses most of the king's ships to protect the posts there ...',[558] few ships remained for cruiser patrol or convoy escort. Only five sloops were attached to the station in June 1795, and only four six months later.[559] The number was reduced still further at the end of the year by the departure of H.M.S. Lapwing for England escorting a convoy.[560] Another major reason for Parker's asking for more sloops was the uselessness of the schooners in squadron service.[561]

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556. A later instance is described in: ADM 1/248: Hyde Parker to the Admiralty, March 4, 1797.

557 - 559. ADM 1/246: William Parker to the Admiralty, June 29, September 3 and November 3, 1795.

560. ADM 1/246: William Parker to Spencer, November 3, 1795.

561. Of the three then attached to the squadron - Mosquito and Flying Fish were indifferent sailers and armed with only 4 guns each. Dispatch, the smallest, had neither guns nor swivels butoonly small arms and musquetoons.

Accompanying his report to the Admiralty of November 3rd, 1795, Parker enclosed a plan of the disposition of the smaller warships on the station, including those for which he had asked as reinforcement. Even with the potential additions included, the disposition shows to what an extent the San Domingo campaign had usurped the station's resources[562]:-

PROPOSED DISTRIBUTION OF SMALLER WARSHIPS:

JAMAICA SQUADRON - NOVEMBER 1795

Function	Large Frigates	Small Frigates	Sloops
a. At Port-au-Prince, protecting army.	1	1	1
b. At Irois & St. Marc, protecting army.	-	2	-
c. At the Mole, to escort convoys through Windward Passage	1	1	-
d. To cruize off Jeremie, against the Petit Gonaive and Léogane privateers	-	-	1
e. To cruize north of Gonaive to protect San Domingo trade, especially from Port-au-Prince and the Mole	-	-	1
f. To cruize off Monte Cristi and Pointe Isabéllique	-	1	1
g. To cruize within the Caicos Passage	-	-	1
h. To cruize along the south coast of San Domingo between Jacquemel and Altavella.	-	1	1
i. To cruize off Tiburon	-	-	1
j. To cruize off the north coast of Jamaica	-	1	2
k. To escort convoys between Jamaica and San Domingo.	-	1	1
Total = 20 warships:	2	8	10

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562. ADM 1/246: Enclosed in Parker's despatch to the Admiralty of November 3, 1795. Note that the figures include ships which the command had not yet received.

In other directions, the Jamaica squadron's strategy against the privateers differed from that used by the Leewards station. During 1797 and 1798 a series of vigorous and enterprising "cutting-out" operations were carried out against selected privateer bases. This strategic change of plan became possible only after the station's force of small warships had greatly increased. It was also due to the belated realization that cruising and partial blockade could not in themselves produce a decisive result. In any event, these raids were carefully planned, boldly executed and almost always successful. Between April 1797 and the following July there are accounts of six major operations of this kind, during which many enemy privateers, merchantmen and prizes were captured or burned and shore-batteries disabled or destroyed.[563] In the later months of 1798, growing attention was paid to the Spanish privateer bases on Puerto Rico and Hispanolia.

In conclusion it was not the fault of the station commanders that the privateers were not defeated. The main reason was the insufficiency of small warships on both stations,

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563. From the accounts contained in ADM 1/248: Harvey's despatches to the Admiralty, these were:-

April 6, 1797: Night-attack by frigates and their ships-boats against Cape Roxo by Captain Ricketts, with REGULUS, 44 and MAGICIENNE, 32. 13 privateers and their prizes captured or burned; 2 batteries destroyed.

April 20/21, 1797: Night-attack on Jean Rabel by Commodore Hugh Pigot with frigates HERMIONE, MERMAID and QUEBEC, sloop DRAKE, and cutter PENELOPE. Nine prize merchantmen retaken.

May, 1797: Raid on Monte Cristi during which boats of CERES and GANNET 'cut out' a Guinea slaver. (see next page)

a deficiency which was not entirely remedied even by the end of the period. Many other factors were responsible: the Admiralty's failure to recognize the need for warships of the right type; the apathy of the British colonies in contributing to their maritime defence;[564] the folly of many merchant shipmasters who played into the hands of the privateers by refusing to take convoy; the great difficulty of manning and equipping warships in the Caribbean and[565] the inadequacy of repair facilities in the dockyards there; the ease with which the enemy were able to man their privateers by the exchange of prisoners-of-war under a flag of truce.

Above all, the sequence of events during the period emphasized the fact that the only complete answer to the privateers lay in the capture of every enemy-held island and base. Otherwise, as fast as they were captured more were built.

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563 (cont.) June 30/July 1, 1797: Raid on Port-au-Plat by sloop TARTAR and cutter SPARROW. Two privateers and four prizes taken. December 27, 1797: 'Cutting out' expedition against Guadilla Bay, Puerto Rico, by Commodore Ricketts with MAGICIENNE, REGULUS and DILIGENCE. Six enemy privateers and merchantmen taken. July 1798: Two raids against privateer bases on the Puerto Rican coast by ACASTA, CERES and REGULUS. Captures included a large enemy privateer, LA MUTINE, 18.

564. The colonies' chaotic system of coastal defence and fortification are well described for an earlier period in Richard Pares': 'War and Trade in the West Indies,' pp. 234 - 252.

565. This problem is mentioned repeatedly, e.g. in: Spencer Papers I, 250 - 251; ADM 1/247, William Parker to Admiralty, June 19, 1796; and ADM 1/248, Hyde Parker to Admiralty, December 23, 1796.

Much, indeed, had been achieved as a result of the amphibious operations of 1793/4 and 1797/8. But complete success was never obtained. Guadeloupe remained in French possession; the campaign for San Domingo ended in failure; the neutral islands and Spanish Caribbean colonies still harboured the enemy. From these essential bases, the privateers continued to operate and thrive.

CHAPTER 6

ADMIRALTY AND CABINET - i. : 1788 - 1794

Important as were the parts played by the local commanders at Jamaica and the Leeward Islands,[566] the ultimate powers of decision and responsibility for strategic planning always lay at home. The deliberations of Pitt's chief ministers in Cabinet, the influence of the King, the debating and lobbying in Parliament were the prime factors in shaping the nation's policy. Apart from the Prime Minister, four men were in a position to decide how the available naval and military resources should be used once war broke out.

Henry Dundas, First Viscount Melville, [567] was the most important. As Pitt's intimate friend and trusted lieutenant, as the holder of several key offices simultaneously, his influence upon the conduct of the war was profound especially in its early years. Jovial, aggressive and ambitious, he was a skilful politician and keen debater. His faults were as great as his virtues; a capacity for intrigue and patronage and a love of power, which resented competition and criticism. Dundas blatantly exploited his influence over Pitt to gain a

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566. See chapters 1 and 2.

567. Biographical details in D.N.B. vi, pp. 186 - 191 and the following lives: by J.A. Lovat Fraser (Cambridge, 1916); H. Furber (Oxford, 1931) and C. Matheson (1933).

dominant position in the Cabinet. Appointed Solicitor-General for Scotland in 1766 at the age of twenty-four, he then became Lord Advocate and was for thirty years the most powerful man in Scotland. In 1782 he became Treasurer of the Navy and two years later a Commissioner of the India Board, and its President in 1793. In June 1791, Pitt brought him into the Cabinet as Home Secretary and gave him full charge over colonial affairs.

Against mounting criticism as the war progressed Dundas never wavered in his belief that Britain's strategy should be colonial rather than continental, nor that commercial gains were in the long run as important as military victories. This doctrine explains his obsession with the West Indies, where the seizure of prosperous enemy colonies and the opening up of markets for British manufactures offered a tempting prize. Although the strategy was sound in principle, Dundas chose to ignore the many practical problems involved. Therein lay the seeds of failure of the two major expeditions sent to the West Indies in the period. Even after the heavy casualties in San Domingo and against strong opposition from his colleagues in the Cabinet, Dundas continued to urge the despatch of more forces. It was fortunate that after 1797, Pitt chose to listen to them rather than Dundas.

William Wyndham Grenville, Baron Grenville,[568] a cousin of

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568. Biographical details in: D.N.B. VIII, pp. 567 - 581.

Pitt, was appointed Home Secretary in June 1789. Two years later he became Foreign Secretary, an office he held with conspicuous success for eleven crucial years. Able, industrious, painstaking and with a legalistic mind, Grenville possessed many of the qualifications needed for the office. But his cold unsympathetic manner and tendency to violent outbursts of temper made him unpopular. Quite different to Dundas in character, there existed a mutual dislike which frequently provoked disunity in Cabinet. Grenville also often disagreed with Pitt's policy, particularly his neutralism. As an intransigent conservative, he detested revolutions and favoured the most repressive measures against France. As a result, he was frequently to be found in Cabinet at the head of the war party in opposition to Pitt. There, too, he opposed Dundas for other reasons. Grenville's forte was European diplomacy and he skilfully undertook the complex negotiations between Britain and her continental allies. In his view, only a direct attack upon France in Europe would secure victory and he naturally regarded Dundas' obsession with colonial campaigns as a wasteful diversion.

John Pitt, second Earl of Chatham,[569] son of the "Great Commoner" and elder brother of the Prime Minister, succeeded Lord Howe as First Lord of the Admiralty in July 1788. Indolent,

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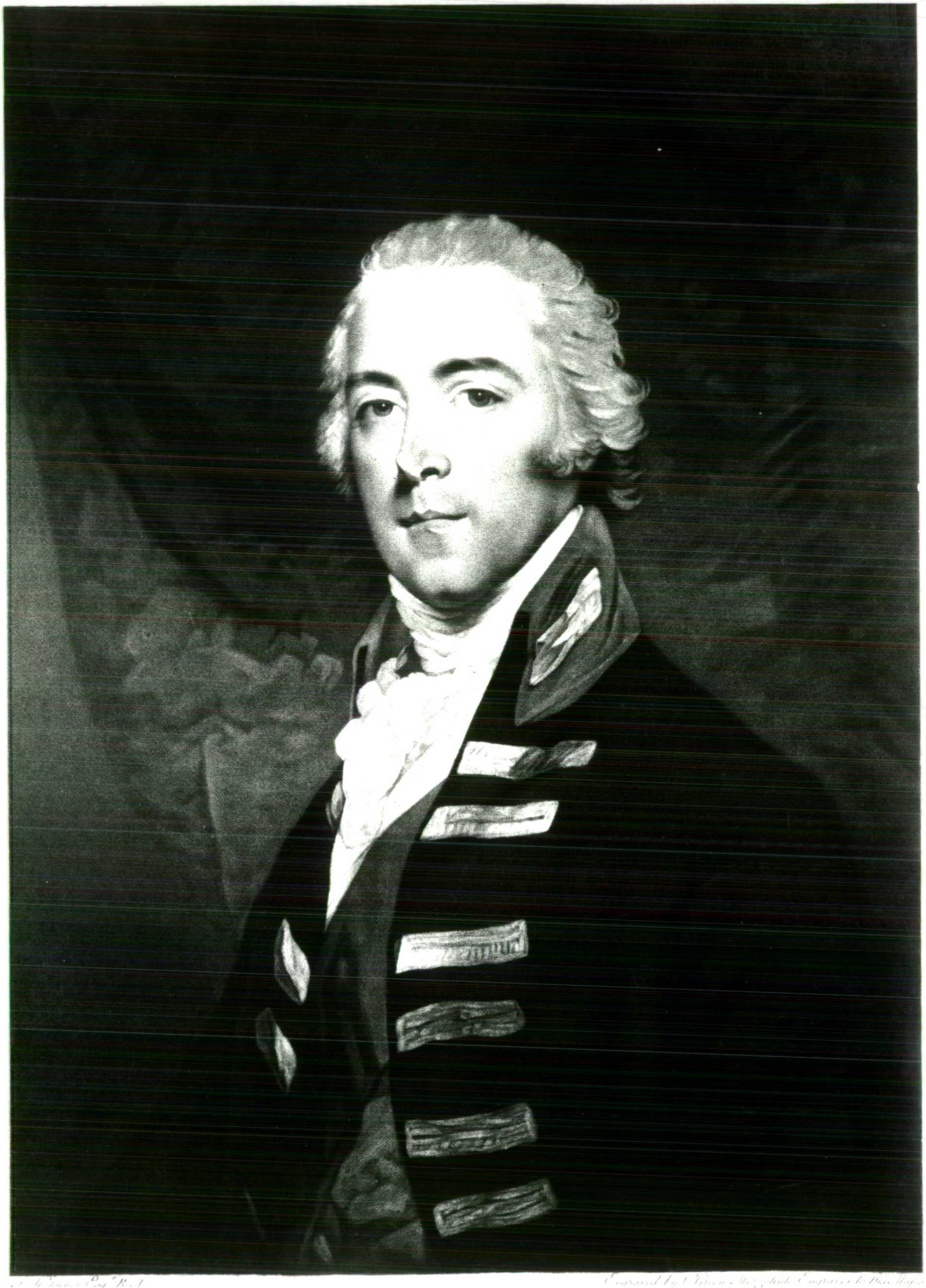
569. Biographical details in: D.N.B. XV, pp. 1230 - 1231.



JOHN, EARL OF CHATHAM, &c. &c.

incompetent and quite out of place at the Admiralty, he resembled his distinguished father in face and person only and his manners were said: ' ... to prohibit all familiarity and forbid approach'[570]

For six important years he remained at the head of the Admiralty only by virtue of his brother's position and being a favourite of the King. His views on West Indian strategy are difficult to assess, because he made so little positive contribution towards solving any of the Navy's problems. One can discern a preference for keeping the fleet in European waters and opposition to joint overseas campaigns with the army, but that is all. Often the management of his extensive estates in Shropshire and Ireland supplanted all other interests. Even after his dismissal from the Admiralty in December 1794,[571] he remained in the Cabinet as Lord Privy Seal and then Lord President of the Council, to act as a thorn in the side of his successor.

Chatham's incompetence at the Admiralty was compensated by the ability of the Comptroller, Rear-Admiral Sir Charles Middleton Son of a customs collector at Leith and distantly related to Dundas on his great-uncle's side, Middleton rose to a dominating position at the Admiralty, culminating in his appointment as First Lord in 1805 at the age of eighty. After various commands

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570. Wraxall: 'Memoirs ... ', iii, p. 129.

571. See pp. 303-5.

including service in the Leeward Islands during the Seven Years' War, he was made Comptroller in August 1778, with charge of the Navy Board. His ability became widely recognised, although a proneness to give advice to his superiors was resented in some quarters. Thus he incurred the anger of Lord Howe in 1787, who tried to prevent his promotion to rear-admiral.[572, 573] After struggling for years to improve the Navy Board and general naval administration, Middleton resigned the Comptrollership in March 1790, disgusted at the Government's delay in implementing his recommendations.[574] For the next four years he was Chatham's closest adviser at the Admiralty, in spite of the fact that he had no official capacity there until joining the Board in May 1794. Thus, although neither a politician nor a member of the Cabinet, Middleton came to exert a strong influence upon strategic planning because of his closeness to Chatham and great knowledge of naval affairs. As will be shown, it was the latter which enabled him to expose the weaknesses in Dundas' West Indian strategy.[575]

These then were the key figures, most responsible for the

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572. Barham Papers, (N.R.S.), vol. II, intro.

573. A. Aspinall: The later correspondence of George III, vol. I, p. 355: The King to Pitt, December 15, 1787, which describes the quarrel.

574. N.R.S.: Barham Papers, vol. II: Middleton to Pitt, February 8 and March 15, 1790.

575. See pp. 313-4.

conduct of the war - Pitt, Dundas, Grenville and Chatham in the Cabinet and Middleton at the Admiralty. Of the six others in the Cabinet in February 1793, four were little concerned with strategy,[576] and the two remaining members, Amherst, commander-in-chief of the Army, and Richmond, master-general of Ordnance, were quite ineffectual and very much under Dundas' control.

Within the Admiralty the six Lords of the Admiralty Board played little part in overall strategic planning. Their role was to implement the decisions of the Cabinet insofar as they affected the Navy. Between June 1791 and April 1793 the composition of the Board did not change, its two outstanding members being Lord Hood and Vice-Admiral Alan Gardner.[577] Hood's main concern was with the Mediterranean Fleet and the operations at Toulon, but Gardner became directly involved in the early stages of the West Indies campaign.[578] The function of the First and Second Secretaries of the Admiralty was primarily to insure that the instructions of the First Lord and the Board reached those concerned. The Admiralty were fortunate to have such an able and experienced First Secretary

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576. Gower (Lord Privy Seal); Camden)Lord President of the Council); Loughborough (Lord Chancellor); and Hawkesbury (President of the Board of Trade).

577. See Appendix 2.

578. See chapter 1, pp. 19-22.

in the person of Sir Philip Stephens, who remained in that office for thirty-two years (June 1763 - March 1795).[579]

From the first days of the war, two views prevailed as to the best strategy to be adopted in the West Indies. The Admiralty expected the enemy to concentrate on a 'guerre de course', in which case the Navy would operate defensively giving protection to the islands and seaborne trade. Dundas and the War Office, on the other hand, envisaged major operations against the enemy colonies, including the despatch of expeditionary forces from Britain. The latter, it was claimed by their adherents, would fully realize Pitt's own very limited war aims: a short war in which entanglement in Europe would be avoided and French overseas possessions would be seized as commercial gains and bargaining counters at the peace conference table.[580]

Sir Charles Middleton championed the Admiralty cause, clearly expressed in two memoranda he prepared for Chatham during 1793.[581, 582] Because of the numerical inferiority and poor state of their ships-of-the-line, the French were in

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579. Biographical details in D.N.B. XVIII, pp. 1066 - 1067.

580. Holland Rose: 'Cambridge History of the British Empire', vol. ii, pp. 48 - 49.

581. PRO 30/8: Chatham Papers - vol. 365, part ii, ff 54 - 57. Memorandum to Chatham, entitled 'War with France', (March (?) 1793.

582. N.R.S.: Barham Papers, vol. II, pp. 360 - 368: Long memorandum to Chatham, entitled 'State of the Navy and War Aims', October 1793.

no position to make a direct fleet challenge. Their plan would therefore be to despatch small flying squadrons from the Atlantic ports and operate them from bases in the Caribbean, while privateers searched across the latitudes to windward of the British Antilles to intercept the incoming trade. Rather than ships-of-the-line, the station commanders there would need large numbers of frigates, sloops, brigs and cutters to perform the vital functions of regular cruizing and convoy escort. As the war unfolded, the shrewdness of Middleton's analysis was repeatedly confirmed.

Unfortunately, however, it was the alternative policy advocated by Dundas and the War Office which carried the day with Pitt and the Cabinet. Until the summer of 1794, the launching of military expeditions against the enemy colonies was the predominant theme, with the Navy relegated to the subordinate role of providing support. At first, events favoured this strategy. In the early months of 1793, the island of Tobago fell without a struggle[583] and the enemy's retantion of Martinique and Guadeloupe was made precarious by a civil war in which the rival royalist and republican factions fought to gain the upper hand. Most important of all, the enemy's richest colony, San Domingo, openly invited

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583. A. Aspinall: The later correspondence of George III ... vol. II, p. 46: The King to Dundas, June 1, 1793: 'I am rejoiced at the information of the taking of Tobago, which I trust will ... be followed by that of other valuable islands...'

British intervention.[584]

The summer however brought a serious check. Earlier rumours of enemy warships sailing from Brest with the Caribbean as their probably destination,[585] were reinforced in June by more definite intelligence. Six, or possibly seven, French sail-of-the-line were observed coming out of Brest by a frigate on blockade patrol.[586] Another Admiralty source of information declared they were bound for the West Indies and that the transports they were escorting carried troops.[587] Pitt at once called a Cabinet, which met the day after the news was received. In view of the emergency, the Cabinet agreed to the immediate despatch of a powerful squadron of 9 ships-of-the-line under Vice Admiral Gardner, in order to reinforce the Leewards station and, if possible, reach there before the enemy. As Pitt himself admitted, this squadron had been intended for the Mediterranean where it was badly needed. The hurried change of plan decided upon by the Cabinet was the first instance of other theatres of war being sacrificed on account of the situation in the West Indies.

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584. See chapter 2, p.77.

585. A. Aspinall ... vol. II, p. 19: Chatham to the King, March 13, 1793: ' ... the destination of the ships observed coming out of Brest must be a matter of conjecture ... '.

586, 587. Fortescue MSS (Dropmore Papers): vol. II, pp. 402 - 403: Pitt, at Downing Street, to Grenville, June 30, 1793.

Although Gardner arrived there before the enemy his subsequent operations, especially the attack on Martinique, failed dismally.[588] The repulse caused a stir in England and it was apparent that much greater military and naval forces would have to be sent out in order to conquer the enemy islands. This very situation laid bare the fundamental errors in the Ministry's strategy. With inadequate military forces available, the Cabinet were faced with undertaking large-scale overseas expeditions at the same time that the country had drifted into costly and negative campaigns on the Continent, from which it was hard to withdraw. Most to blame for this dilemma was Dundas; in his position as War Minister he should have firmly resisted the temptation to undertake other campaigns, however attractive, before anything else. In July, he admitted to Grenville it was becoming increasingly difficult to find the necessary troops and that perhaps foreign detachments would have to be enlisted. And yet he stubbornly refused to abandon further operations in the West Indies, which remained in his view the first priority.[589]

Dundas' plan which received Cabinet approval in July, envisaged the despatch of a major expeditionary force from Britian to achieve the decisive result which had eluded Gardner.

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588. Fortescue MSS (Dropmore Papers): vol. II, p. 405: Buckingham to Grenville, July 17, 1793.

589. Ibid. pp. 407 - 408: Dundas to Grenville, July, 1793.

In order to surmount the reasons for the earlier failure - lack of troops in the theatre and the fact that Gardner had commanded a naval squadron and not an expeditionary force - as many troops, transports and storeships as could be got together would be despatched. Dundas confidently expected the main convoy would be ready to sail from Portsmouth on or about September 20th,[590] followed shortly afterwards by a smaller force created out of the recently reinforced garrison at Gibraltar. All might have gone according to plan if the Grey-Jervis expedition had been ready on time and if pressure of events in Europe had not suddenly intervened. Delays in obtaining transports and stores and in collecting the ships at the rendezvous, repeatedly postponed departure until by the end of October Dundas was becoming very impatient.[591]

Worse was to follow. A sudden deterioration in the military situation in Flanders threatened the army's main base at Ostend. Troops were urgently needed, but none could be found. In desperation, Pitt gave the order for four infantry regiments belonging to the expedition and at that moment actually embarked aboard transports in Portsmouth harbour, to be taken off and rushed across the Channel to defend Ostend.[592] Notwith-

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590. Fortescue MSS (Dropmore Papers): vol. II, pp. 407 - 408: Dundas to Grenville, July 1793.

591. A. Aspinall: 'Later correspondence of George III,' vol. II, p. 113: Dundas to the King, October 26, 1793.

592. Fortescue Papers (Dropmore MSS), vol. II, p. 443: Pitt to Grenville, October 11, 1793.

standing the crisis, the expedition's commanders, Grey and Jervis, naturally deplored the disruption of schedule and Dundas was furious at the prospect of further delay.[593] Pitt tried to soothe him by saying that it was only a temporary set-back and in any case there was no alternative. But the Home Secretary suspected that his cherished West Indies project was being sacrificed and hotly denied the accusation that he was prepared ' ... to starve the garrison in Flanders', in order to get his way.[594]

The events following the dramatic and unexpected seizure of Toulon in September further disorganized the expedition. The troops from the Gibraltar garrison scheduled for the West Indies were hurriedly diverted to Toulon. By mid-November Dundas was forced to admit that the expedition would have to sail in greatly-reduced strength. At a Cabinet held on the 16th,[595] he could not deny the force of his colleagues' argument that the situation at Toulon presented a unique strategic opportunity, to be seized at all costs. Dundas therefore accepted the reduction; not, however, because he thought Toulon was more important but because he realized that had he

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593. Fortescue Papers (Dropmore MSS), vol. II, p. 444: Dundas to Grenville, October 12, 1793; and A. Aspinall ... vol. II, p. 105: Dundas to the King, October 2, 1793.

594. Ibid. Same to same, October 21, 1793.

595. Mentioned in A. Aspinall ... vol. II, p. 123.

not done so, there was a very real danger of the whole West Indies plan being abandoned[596] even so late in the day.

Indeed, long before the problem of acting in concert with the Royalists in France arose, the Toulon crisis focussed attention upon the crucial question: should Britain's offensive operations be concentrated in Europe or overseas? Doubts were beginning to be voiced in Cabinet and in the House of Commons regarding Dundas' obsession with the latter and the danger of persisting with both simultaneously. The King saw the risks very clearly: ' ... the feeding of Toulon with troops and at the same time attempting large operations in the West Indies is quite impossible'.[597] Rightly, he could see no reason why the expedition should not be postponed another six months until the Mediterranean situation had clarified.

Grenville at the Foreign Office, never a supporter of overseas campaigns, rather surprisingly opposed the abandonment of the expedition. He felt to do so at the last moment would create an impression of alarm and panic, which would more than offset the material gain of having more British troops available in Europe.[598] Grenville must have felt very strongly about

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596. Fortescue Papers (Dropmore MSS), vol. II, pp. 121 - 122. Dundas to the King, November 15/16, 1793: 'Nothing can be more adverse to the whole train of Mr. Dundas' thinking than a derelinquishment of an offensive campaign in the West Indies ...'

597. A. Aspinall ... vol. II, p. 122: The King to Dundas, November 16, 1793.

598. Fortescue Papers (Dropmore MSS), vol. II, p. 464: Grenville to Auckland, November 11, 1793.

this to give such support to Dundas, since at that moment they were on very bad terms. A bitter quarrel had broken out between Pitt and Dundas on the one side and Grenville and his brother, the Duke of Buckingham, on the other over a question of patronage [599] which was only settled the following January.[600] On every other occasion the Foreign Secretary condemned sending more troops overseas when every man was needed in Europe. Lord Auckland in the Government and Burke and Windham in Opposition shared his criticism of operations in the Caribbean. The two latter were particularly hostile, because such diversions adversely affected all their plans for helping the Royalists in France.[601]

In spite of all the delays and opposition, the West Indies expedition finally sailed from Portsmouth on November 26th, 1793. Although much smaller than originally intended, the joint commanders had reluctantly to accept the fact. The fortunes of the expedition in the West Indies have already been described;[602] it remains to consider the reactions in England to its progress and the developments which followed.

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600. Fortescue ... vol. II, pp. 482 - 490 - quotes a long series of exchanges between both parties over the issue.

601. The Windham Papers (edited by the Earl of Rosebery; 2 vols., 1813). vol. I, p. 171: Windham to Burke, November 7, 1793. p. 175; Burke to Windham, November 14, 1793.

602. See chapter 1, pp. 52-4.

On January 21st, 1794, important debates took place in both Houses following the King's speech opening the fourth session of Parliament. No news had by then been received of the expedition's progress, but the members still found a great deal to say about West Indies strategy. In the Lords, the Earl of Wycombe described the attempt on Martinique as so inadequately planned and shamefully executed that it merited a Parliamentary enquiry. He emphasized the vulnerability of Jamaica to enemy attack and concluded his speech by saying that he hoped the Grey-Jervis expedition would do well, but rather doubted it, as ' ... their force had been so maimed and curtailed previous to their final departure'.[603] This was certainly true. Colonel Tarleton then rose to condemn the extent of the National Debt and the Government's gross inactivity in the first year of the war, especially in the West Indies.[604] He was answered by the Earl of Mornington in support of the Government, pointing out the early successes in Tobago and San Domingo.[605]

The debate in the Commons was even more critical of the

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603. Cobbett: Parliamentary History of England from the earliest period to the year 1803, (36 vols.; Hansard; 1817). Vol. xxx (December 1792 - March 1794). Debate on the King's Speech, January 21, 1794. pp. 1098 - 1099.

604. Ibid. p. 1102.

605. Ibid. p. 1115.

Government. In a speech which was said to have electrified the House, Sheridan condemned the whole naval campaign in the West Indies and said that the prospects of the latest expedition had been ruined by procrastination and inefficiency.[606] He was followed by Dundas, who in a long speech stoutly defended the Ministry's conduct of the war.[607] The kernel of his argument was that, far from being guilty of neglect, the Government had succeeded in mobilizing unprecedented numbers of soldiers, seamen and warships during the period. He then turned to the West Indies. Admiral Gardner's operation against Martinique had certainly been a severe disappointment, but its condemnation was unjust. With only 1,400 troops in the theatre and no transports attached to Gardner's squadron, it was hardly surprising that the unexpectedly strong opposition encountered had not been overcome.

In moving the amendment to the Address Fox, the leader of the Opposition, vigorously attacked Dundas' strategy.[608] Why, he demanded with characteristically effective oratory, had the nation's precious military strength been frittered away in a diversion to the West Indies, when it ought to have been used to strike at the heart of France?[609] In the benches behind him,

606. Cobbett: Parliamentary History of England from the earliest period to the year 1803. (36. vols.; Hansard; 1817) Vol. xxx (December 1792 - March 1794). Debate on the King's Speech, January 21, 1794. p. 1214.

607. Ibid pp. 1247 - 1251.

608, 609. Cobbett ... vol. xxx. Debate on the King's Speech, January 21, 1794. pp. 1259 - 1269.

Burke and Windham gave vociferous support. Above all, Fox went on, it was supreme folly to divide the limited military and naval forces available in such a way that no impact was made anywhere. He concluded his speech by disputing Dundas' assurances regarding the protection of trade in the Caribbean. On the contrary, the situation in Jamaica showed the reverse to be true.[610] After the Prime Minister had wound up for the Government, Fox's amendment to the address was defeated by 277 votes to 59. The figures are misleading; although they express the paucity of Whig Opposition in the Commons they do not indicate what was much more significant - the very real feelings of doubt and alarm over the Ministry's strategy, which had been repeatedly expressed during the debate.

The same were heard two weeks later when the Commons debated the Army Estimates.[611] On this occasion, the Government's standing was not enhanced by a feeble opening speech delivered by the Secretary at War, Sir Charles Yonge. Fox again condemned the preference given the Caribbean over all other theatres of war, particularly the Mediterranean. The Ministry was at that moment under heavy fire over the forced evacuation from Toulon, which was deplored throughout Britain.

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610. Cobbett ... vol. xxx. Debate on the King's Speech, January 21, 1794. pp. 1259 - 1269. ' ... Has he forgot the situation in which commerce was left in the West Indies? Has he forgot how long the whole Jamaica fleet waited for convoy, and under what convoy it was at last obliged to sail?'

611. Ibid. House of Commons Debate on the Army Estimates, February 4, 1794. pp. 1329 - 1346.

Fox described it as yet another example of the Government's selfish and cynical strategy which was bound to have a shameful reaction upon the French royalists. Moreover, he cleverly showed that the decision to abandon Toulon opened up the whole question of what was the real strategic object of the war. Caribbean expeditions were only defensible if the main purpose was to acquire overseas possessions. But if the object of the war was to defeat France, as indeed Fox said it must be, ' ... the possession of Toulon would be more instrumental than Martinico, Guadeloupe, San Domingo and all the other West Indian islands together'.[612] Against such cogent reasoning, the Ministry could give no satisfactory reply.

Eighteen months of hostilities had been long enough to expose the Ministry's amateurish and haphazard conduct of the war. For a time its failings had been concealed by the early successes in the Caribbean, culminating in the achievements of the Grey-Jervis expeditionary force. In a sense, too, the Ministry could use the situation there to offset glaring failures elsewhere, in Flanders and at Toulon. But the reasons for the temporary successes in the West Indies were conveniently forgotten. They were the outcome of the enemy's extreme vulnerability in that theatre and not brilliant strategic planning in London. The reckoning came in the middle of 1794,

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612. Cobbett ... vol. xxx: Commons debate on the Army Estimates, February 4, 1794. pp. 1339 - 1343.

as the tide turned in the West Indies. The enemy were allowed to regain the initiative and build up their strength to inflict a series of sharp reverses on the British forces. As soon as this happened, the administrative machinery at home was shown to be quite incapable of dealing with the situation.

Since January 1793, the composition of the Cabinet had remained unchanged[613] and when the crisis came it was proven ill-fitted for its task. Four of its ten members had no knowledge of strategy and three of the rest had already shown their incompetence - Chatham at the Admiralty, Amherst as commander -in-chief of the Army and Richmond as the Master-General of Ordnance.[614] As a result, decision-making in the Cabinet during the first eighteen months of the war rested with Pitt, Dundas and Grenville. Moreover, Grenville's predilection with European diplomacy and Pitt's detestation of war meant that most of the strategic problems were delegated to Dundas. He revelled in his widespread powers and jealously sought to retain them. But by the summer of 1794, it was apparent that the war effort was becoming adversely affected by Dundas' multiple responsibilities:Home Secretary, Colonial Minister,

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613. See Appendix 4.

614. The office of Secretary at War, titular head of the War Office, did not at this time carry with it Cabinet rank. The holder, Sir George Yonge (1731 - 1812), was a nonentity. See D.N.B. xxi, pp. 1239 - 1240.

Treasurer of the Navy, President of the India Office, chief Minister in the Commons and master of Scottish affairs - there seemed no department of the nation's business in which his hand was not felt.[615]

Political developments in July 1794 gave Pitt the opportunity he needed, to make changes in the Cabinet and to tighten up the whole war administration. Ever since the French Revolution, the Whig Opposition had been split into two halves, the extreme Francophiles led by Fox and the moderates under the Duke of Portland.[616] In order to strengthen the Ministry's position, Pitt had long tempted the latter with offers of coalition and by July 1794 he was finally successful. The Portland Whigs joined the Government. In spite of the many political advantages, however, the junction brought a number of problems in its train.

The chief concerned the respective positions of Portland and Dundas. As the price of their support for the Ministry, the Portland Whigs insisted that their leader became Home Secretary. The condition put Pitt in a dilemma. Anxious at all costs to gain the adherence of the moderate Whigs, he

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615. As early as June 1793, he was fending off criticisms of delay and inefficiency from Grenville. Dundas admitted then that he was: ' ... rather overloaded by pressure upon my time from various quarters ... ' Fortescue Papers (Dropmore MSS) vol. II, pp. 395 - 396: Dundas to Grenville, June 1, 1793.

616. William Henry Cavendish Bentinck, 3rd Duke of Portland (1738 - 1809). A dull but reasonable politician; rich, urbane but a poor orator and quite ineffective in Cabinet. Had no interest in strategic matters. See D.N.B. II, pp. 302 - 304.

knew nonetheless that Dundas would refuse to vacate the office, as tantamount to a reduction of his powers. It was not merely a question of the Home Secretaryship; under its mantle, as has been shown, Dundas wielded power in three directions - home affairs, the colonies and conduct of the war. Moreover, Pitt was himself affected. Intent on change, he was yet loth to jeopardize in any way the close working links which existed between Dundas and himself. 'I feel it quite impossible to venture the experiment of leaving the War Department in the Duke (of Portland)'s hands ... if all the details of the war were to be settled by communication with a person new both to me and to others,[617] I am sure the business could not go on a week. This is the leading consideration with me and seems decisive ... I own besides I could neither expect to establish the same sort of communication with the Duke which I am used to with Dundas, nor would I be content on the other hand to leave that department to his separate management ... '.[618]

In desperation the Prime Minister turned to Grenville. On July 5th, he asked him to give up the Foreign Office in favour of Portland and take over a remodelled Home Department;[619]

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617. Pitt's italics.

618. Fortescue Papers (Dropmore MSS), vol. III, pp. 595 - 596: Pitt to Grenville, July 5, 1794.

619. Ibid. Same to same, July 5, 1794.

the manoeuvre being an attempt to satisfy both Dundas and the Duke. Grenville replied the same day, generously accepting the personal sacrifice involved.[620] Fortunately, however, Portland declined the offer. He told Pitt on July 7th that the Foreign Secretaryship was the office he least wished to accept, adding that it could not be in better hands than Grenville's. He had therefore made up his mind to accept the Home Department, without the management of the war, but with the colonies. Pitt agreed with alacrity to this proposal and believed that the whole matter had at last been settled satisfactorily.[621] The wide and overlapping powers which Dundas as Secretary of State had hitherto exercised were now split into three distinct responsibilities, each under the control of a Cabinet Minister. Dundas having left the Home Office, retained overall control of strategy by being appointed to the new office of Secretary of State for War. The Duke of Portland succeeded him as Home Secretary, which office continued to carry with it responsibility for colonial affairs. The third post was filled by an entirely new figure, who took over the enlarged functions of the War Office as Secretary at War, an office which for the first time became one of Cabinet rank. He was William Windham, the Whig statesman and close supporter

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620. Fortescue Papers (Dropmore MSS), vol. III, pp. 595 - 596: Grenville to Pitt, July 6, 1794.

621. Ibid. Pitt to Grenville, July 7, 1794.

of Portland. A strong personality and a keen advocate of a direct attack upon France and aid for the Royalists in Brittany and Vendée, Windham at once made his mark in the Cabinet. From the first he was a strong opponent of Dundas' schemes.[622]

Pitt's hopes that everything had been settled were shattered by Dundas' threat to resign two days after the Cabinet changes had been made. He bitterly resented having to surrender control of the Colonies to Portland, because of his particular interest in the affairs of India and the West Indies.[623] The King shared his misgivings and only gave way to the change with reluctance: 'Though I do not quite approve of the West Indies being added to the Home Department, I will acquiesce in the arrangement, but at the same time call on Mr. Secretary Dundas to continue Secretary of State for the War ...'[624] In addition, Dundas realized that the promotion of the office of Secretary at War to the Cabinet with Windham as its holder, was bound to circumscribe his overall direction of the war.

In a long letter to the Prime Minister on July 9th, Dundas gave further reasons for opposing the changes.[625] The division

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622. For biographical details, see D.N.B. xxi, pp. 643 - 646.

623. H.M.C.: Stanhope Papers, vol. II, p. 255: Dundas to Stanhope, July 9, 1794.

624. A. Aspinall ... vol. II, pp. 222 - 223. The King to Pitt, July 9, 1794.

625. Melville Castle Muniments: Scottish Record Office. Series GD/51/24-1: Dundas to Pitt, July 9, 1794.

of the Secretary of State's department into separate functions would, he thought, result in divided counsels and undermine the whole war effort. In particular, the idea of a separate War Ministry would prove unworkeable in practice: 'The operations of war are canvassed and adjusted in the Cabinet alone', and the function of the departmental ministers was merely to carry out its decisions. Moreover, Dundas was strongly in favour of a small Cabinet, in which two or three of its members exercised sweeping powers. He therefore viewed with alarm Windham's elevation to the Cabinet; partly because it threatened his own position, partly because the direction of the war at Cabinet level was in enough hands already: ' ... besides, you will recollect that the Master-General of Ordnance, the First Lord of the Admiralty and the Commander-in-Chief are all in the Cabinet'.[626] As Pitt retained the greatest confidence in Dundas as War Minister and would agree to no other arrangement for the War Department, both he and the King brought the strongest pressure on him to stay. The Prime Minister's plea was phrased in the most personal terms, that he could not carry on the Government without him and would be 'completely heartbroken'[627] if he adhered to his decision. After one more day of suspense, Dundas gave way and agreed to

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626. Melville Castle Muniments: Scottish Record Office, GD/51/1/24-1: Dundas to Pitt, July 9, 1794.

627. Ibid. GD/51/1/24-2: Pitt to Dundas, same day, 11.45 p.m.

remain in office.[628]

The political changes and Cabinet re-organization of July 1794 have been described in detail, because they had important repercussions upon West Indies strategy both at the time and in the months which followed. In the first place, Dundas was no longer in control of both military and colonial affairs in the islands. This fact intensified the differences which already existed between the colonial governors, merchants and planters on the one hand and the naval and military commanders on the other, as to the best means of resisting the enemy. As a result, a disastrous clash of interests occurred in the last months of 1794 and at the beginning of 1795, particularly in Jamaica. The merchants and planters voiced their complaints to the new Colonial Secretary, Portland, while the military commanders continued to address themselves to Dundas. Secondly, this period was one of stagnation for British strategy in the Caribbean, the interval between the major efforts made by the expeditions of 1793/4 and 1795/6. Why this happened has hitherto been attributed to the force of the French counter-attack in the Caribbean. Much more important, however, was the transformation which had taken place in the instrument which shaped the British strategy - the Cabinet in London. Until its new ministers had found their feet, and Dundas had grown accustomed

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628. Melville Castle Muniments: Scottish Record Office, GD/51/1/24-3: Dundas to Pitt, July 10.

to no longer running the war single-handed, there was inevitably a pause and lack of forceful direction.

By September 1794, however, the awareness of danger in the West Indies and need for urgent action had returned. On successive days that month, Dundas bombarded the First Lord of the Admiralty with demands for the immediate despatch of naval reinforcements to that theatre.[629] With the loss of Guadeloupe, lack of progress and heavy casualties in the San Domingo campaign and the news that eight ships-of-the-line were about to sail from France,[630] Dundas realized that only one thing stood in the way of complete disaster: ' ... I conclude without any hesitation that our security in the West Indies for many months to come depends entirely on a commanding and extensive naval force'.[631] That Chatham did not know this already and the fact that Dundas had to urge him, twice in as many days, of the need for urgent action were indications of incapacity at the Admiralty which were not forgotten in the ensuing months.

At a full Cabinet held on October 10th[632]- and one of the

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629. PRO 30/8: Chatham Papers. vol. 368, part i: ff. 26 - 29; 30 - 32: Dundas to Chatham, September 13, 1794; same to same, September 14.

630. A. Aspinall ... vol. II, p. 17: Dundas to the King, September 14, 1794.

631. PRO 30/8: Chatham Papers, vol. 368, part i: f. 31.

632. Present were: Lord Chancellor, Lord President of the Council, Portland, Mansfield, Grenville, Amherst, Hawkesbury, Dundas, Pitt, Chatham & Windham (=11).

first at which the new Ministers, Portland and Windham, attended - Dundas repeated his assertion that the naval forces in the Caribbean should be reinforced immediately. There is no record of Chatham's part in the discussion which followed, nor whether he did oppose Dundas, But the realization that he had neither foreseeen such a situation nor been the first to remedy the deficiency, proclaimed his incapacity to everybody present. When the meeting was over, the minutes were sent that evening to the King for his approval. The Cabinet strongly recommended, in view of the intelligence that an enemy squadron was about to sail from Brest bound in all probability for the West Indies, that the British naval forces there should at once be augmented. Orders should therefore be sent to the commander-in-chief, Mediterranean, to detach six ships-of-the-line from his fleet and send them at once to the Leeward Islands.[633] The King approved the Cabinet's decision, but commented that only a threat as serious as the appearance of a large enemy squadron in the West Indies, could justify such a weakening of the Mediterranean fleet.[634]

One final ministerial change took place in 1794. For many months it had been obvious that the Earl of Chatham was

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633. B.M. Add. MSS 40102: Dundas Papers, f. 1: Record of Cabinet minute, October 10, 1794.

634. Ibid ... 40100, f. 145: the King to Dundas, October 11, 1794: and A. Aspinall ... vol. II, p. 257: same to same, October 25, 1794.

unequal to his situation as First Lord of the Admiralty. Criticism had been voiced openly as early as September 1793. Although not at that time in the Cabinet, Windham did not hesitate to blame him for: ' ... the very censurable neglect and mismanagement, so conspicuous in the Admiralty'.[635] Nor did Chatham's frequent lack of attendance and interest pass unnoticed by his staff at the Admiralty; the burden of work and responsibility carried by the Secretaries, Sir Philip Stephens and John Ibbetson, and the Board itself, became that much heavier. Most affected by the situation was Sir Charles Middleton. Ever since resigning as Comptroller of the Navy in March 1790, he had acted as unofficial adviser to the First Lord, taking over much of his work and shielding his incompetence to the outside world as much as possible. He made no secret of the fact that 'the whole of the Admiralty business'[636] was virtually in his hands. But by the summer of 1794, even Middleton's dynamic energy was beginning to feel the strain of combatting the lethargy with which the First Lord had infected the office.[637]

Chatham, however, had been allowed to remain; partly because he was the Prime Minister's brother, partly because

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635. The Windhams Papers (edited by the Earl of Rosebery; 2 vols.; 1913), vol. I, p. 153: Windham to Spencer, September 18, 1793.

636. Barham Papers (N.R.S.), vol. I, p. 8: Middleton to Spencer, December 19, 1794.

637. B.M. Add. MSS. 41079: Dundas Papers, ff. 11 - 12: Middleton to Dundas, July 29, 1794.

he enjoyed the King's favour and confidence.[638] Moreover, the victory of the fleet in the Glorious First of June 1794 action, vicariously gave some lustre to Chatham's tarnished reputation. Nevertheless by this stage, Pitt felt he could no longer ignore the feelings of disquiet which were being widely expressed about the Admiralty. When in July, Chatham made objections to Dundas' new powers and functions as Secretary for War, he got no sympathy from his brother. Pitt told him very firmly that the new arrangements would not in any way impinge upon the Admiralty's sphere of influence.[639]

Jealous of Dundas' continuing control over strategy, Chatham also resented his way of viewing Navy merely as a subordinate instrument in the planning of overseas campaigns. Nowhere was this more obvious than in the West Indies. It was Chatham's opposition to this doctrine just as much as his incompetence, which ultimately led to his downfall. In September 1794, Chatham took his grievances to the King and in a long memorandum set out the reasons why, in his opinion, the Navy was being prevented from carrying out its proper functions.[640] In at least three respects Dundas' colonial

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638. Windham doubted if the Prime Minister would ever sacrifice his brother. Windham Papers ... vol. I, Windham to Spencer, September 18, 1793.

639. PRO 30/8: Chatham Papers, vol. 101, f. 125: Pitt to Chatham, July 12, 1794.

640. PRO 30/8: Chatham Papers, vol. 101, ff. 1 - 4: Memorandum by Chatham to the King, September , 1794.

strategy was entirely to blame:

' 1. The large foreign detachments made and kept abroad, without reference to the naval force to be opposed to them ... which policy has never allowed us that commanding superiority in these seas (i.e. Home and Mediterranean waters) ... '

2. The major inconvenience arising from perpetual requisitions made for frigates to attend the movements of troops with transports.

3. The whole system of frequent convoys ...' [641]

The First Lord was at fault in the third instance. He failed to appreciate how much the Navy would be called upon to provide this form of trade protection and, earlier in the same memorandum, speaks of ' ... the clamorous and unreasonable demands of merchants and underwriters for convoys ... '[642] On the other hand he was undoubtedly correct in the other two assertions.

In a second memorandum written to the King two months later, Chatham aired further grievances. Not only had the Fleet's proper function been adversely affected by the strategy employed in the Caribbean; the sheer demand in ships and men for service there had seriously weakened the Home and Mediterranean fleets. The state of the latter in the early autumn of

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641, 642. PRO 30/8: Chatham Papers, vol. 101, ff. 1 & 3.

1794, was causing anxiety at the Admiralty and Chatham tried to reinforce Lord Hood with every capital ship that could be found.[643] But his efforts were utterly frustrated by the Cabinet's decision of October 10th, authorizing the immediate detachment of six ships-of-the-line from the Mediterranean Fleet for service in the West Indies. Chatham was very angry at the order; it was the epitome of a strategy he most deplored. In his view, the Navy's most powerful ships should be concentrated in the areas where the enemy's naval strength was greatest - in the Mediterranean and off the Atlantic coast of France. Thereby the opportunity of forcing a decisive fleet action would not be missed. But here were six of the Mediterranean Fleet's best ships being sent to the West Indies, ' ... where there were already six others, making twelve there in all, and a vast volume of vessels to be opposed to no naval force at all, but to supply the want of Land Troops ...'[644] Even after the Cabinet decision, Chatham persisted in trying to reinforce the Mediterranean Fleet but failed to do so in the short time in office which remained to him.[645]

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643. PRO 30/8: Chatham Papers, vol. 364, f. 235: Memorandum by Chatham to the King - undated but clearly written during December 1794 or January 1795.

644. Ibid. The capitalization of the words 'Land Troops' is as in the original; perhaps deliberately intended by Chatham.

645. Ibid. During October and November, Chatham had managed to get together five ships-of-the-line and some storeships for the Mediterranean. Although they sailed from Portsmouth early in December, contrary winds forced them back to harbour.

The situation led to an open breach between Chatham and Dundas in December, which finally determined Pitt to replace his brother at the Admiralty. On the 8th he told the King that relations between the Admiralty and the other Government departments had so deteriorated that something would have to be done immediately.[646] The department most involved was the Secretary for War's. Although he did not say so to the King, Pitt was determined in view of the crisis which had arisen over Dundas' position in July, to support him against any further opposition. He proposed that Chatham and Spencer, then Lord Privy Seal, should exchange offices. Knowing that his brother was bound to resist, Pitt then asked the King for his co-operation in making the change less awkward by intimating to Chatham that receiving the Privy Seal would be a personal mark of royal favour.[647]

The King disliked the whole idea. Chatham had always enjoyed his favour and confidence, and when he replied to Pitt on December 9th, he emphasized how well he thought Chatham had done at the Admiralty.[648] Furthermore, the King was at that moment incensed with Pitt for the proposal to remove his son, the Duke of York, from the command of the army in Flanders.

646, 647. A. Aspinall: 'The later correspondence of George III', vol. II, pp. 278 - 279: Pitt to the King, December 8, 1794.

648. A. Aspinall ... vol. II, p. 279: the King to Pitt, December 9, 1794.

Lastly, the King only echoed general feeling when he pointed out that the offer of the Privy Seal could never disguise what was clearly an abrupt dismissal from office.

Yet the King finally yielded to Pitt, on the grounds that the change might be for the 'better convenience of government'. With the greatest reluctance, he wrote to Chatham on December 9th offering the Privy Seal.[649] But the First Lord predictably declined the invitation and ended his reply with the words: ' ... I do not entertain a thought of withdrawing at such a period from an arduous situation'.[650] For five days there was deadlock; Chatham clinging to office - isolated in the Cabinet, but sustained by some support outside. His staunchest ally proved to be Middleton. In his anger at what was happening, Middleton not only championed Chatham but vowed never to serve under another First Lord.[651] Moreover, he warned Dundas that if the rumours of Chatham's departure were true, it would be: ' ... a bold man who ventures to succeed him in the present situation of affairs, but particularly the naval'.[652]

Finally on December 14th, 1794, Chatham gave way to the

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649. A. Aspinall ... vol. II, p. 279: the King to Chatham, same day.

650. Ibid, p. 279: Chatham to the King, same day.

651. PRO 30/8: Chatham Papers, vol. 365, part i, f. 126: Middleton to Chatham, December 12, 1794.

652. B.M. Add. MSS 41079 (Barham/Dundas correspondence, 1788 - 1806), ff. 21 - 25: Middleton to Dundas, December 10, 1794.

mounting pressure and resigned. He left the Admiralty with feelings of intense bitterness against Pitt, Dundas and his appointed successor. But it was not into retirement; he continued to enjoy the King's favour, to have Middleton's loyalty at the Admiralty and to retain his seat in the Cabinet, and his presence cast a shadow over the months ahead.

CHAPTER 7

ADMIRALTY AND CABINET - ii: 1795 - 1802

The person chosen by Pitt to replace Chatham as First Lord of the Admiralty on December 17th, 1794, had much to recommend him. George John Spencer, second Earl Spencer, who assumed the office at the age of thirty-six, was an energetic and hard-working politician, a symbol of Pitt's determination to improve the efficiency of the armed services and the conduct of the war. An influential and wealthy member of the Whig aristocracy, Spencer had been a junior Lord of the Treasury during the short Rockingham ministry of 1782 and became a Pitt supporter on the break-up of the Whig party in 1793. When the Government was strengthened by the junction of the Portland Whigs in June 1794, he was appointed Lord Privy Seal with a seat in the Cabinet.[653]

Despite these attributes, other traits in Spencer's character and the situation he faced on taking office, combined to ensure that his early years at the Admiralty were marked by a succession of crises. He took over lacking experience of high office and with little knowledge of naval affairs. Noone disputed the need for re-organization at the Admiralty,[654] but

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653. Biographical details in: 'Gentleman's Magazine' (1835), i, p. 89 and D.N.B., xviii, pp. 763 - 764.

654. PRO 30/8: vol. 369, part ii, ff. 311 - 312 contains an anonymous letter received at the Admiralty on December 26, 1794. The writer congratulated Spencer on his appointment and urged him to pursue a more energetic naval policy than his predecessor, especially as regards the protection of trade.

until he had mastered his duties Spencer would have been well-advised to proceed cautiously, relying on the guidance of the more experienced members of his Board. But this, unfortunately, was against his nature and his aristocratic self-assurance aroused tension and opposition which were aggravated by a clash of personalities.

In a matter of weeks Spencer had fallen out with four of the six members of the Board.[655] Lord Hood, the senior naval Lord, resigned from the Admiralty in March 1795 after a quarrel with Spencer and was relieved of the command of the Mediterranean fleet two months later. In June another of the senior members, Admiral Sir Philip Affleck, was dismissed from the Board. He complained bitterly to Pitt of treatment received at the hands of Spencer.[656] Although then over seventy, he had in the past been a great help to Chatham at the Admiralty, while the other sea lords were frequently absent on active service.

A third senior and respected member, Admiral Alan Gardner, was as abruptly treated: 'Yesterday noon (February 26th) I received a letter from Spencer acquainting me that a new arrangement of the Board has been fixed upon, in which my name is not included; this is the first intimation I have received

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655. The six members at the time of Spencer's assuming office were: Hood, Gardner, Affleck, Middleton, Perceval and Pybus. See Appendix 2.

656. PRO 30/8: Chatham Papers, vol. 107, part ii, ff. 193 - 196: Admiral Affleck to Pitt, June 8, 1795.

of my dismission ... '.[657]

But the worst trouble arose out of the new First Lord's relations with the most capable member of the Board, Sir Charles Middleton. The latter's powerful position at the Admiralty, both as Chatham's confidential adviser and as a member of the Board since May 1794, has already been shown.[658] At the end of 1794 he was in effect senior naval Lord at the Admiralty, although Hood was senior by promotion.[659] From the start Spencer and Middleton never got on. To differences in age, temperament and experience were added Middleton's resentment of a new master. By virtue of his abilities and Chatham's lack of them, he had achieved a dominant position at the Admiralty. Despite, perhaps even because of, his unique knowledge of naval administration, Middleton was not easy to work with. No one knew this better than Dundas, who warned Spencer of the fact soon after he came to the Admiralty: 'Middleton has very great official talents and merit, but he is a little difficult to act with from an anxiety, I had almost said an irritability of temper, and he requires to have a great deal of his own way of doing business ... '[660] Nevertheless, Dundas strongly advised

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657. PRO 30/8: Chatham Papers, vol. 366, part ii. f. 278: Gardner to Chatham, February 27, 1795.

658. See chapter 6, pp. 275-6.

659. Hood was promoted Admiral in April 1794, Middleton in June, 1795.

660. Althorp MSS: Spencer Papers (N.R.S.), vol. I, pp. 5 - 6: Dundas to Spencer, December 14, 1794, marked 'very private'.

Spencer to bear with his faults, as his departure from the Admiralty would be an irreparable loss.[661] As it was, Spencer had been in office only a short time before Middleton was complaining to Dundas that much ground had been lost since Chatham's departure[662] and threatening to resign unless the Admiralty business was carried out in the way he wished.

Outside the Admiralty, too, Spencer faced considerable difficulties. His initial inexperience and junior position in the Cabinet made it difficult for him to resist the domination of Dundas. Not only did the Secretary for War tend to interfere in purely naval matters; in strategic planning his practice of subordinating naval to military needs was resented and feared at the Admiralty. All these stresses and strains duly played their part when the future West Indies' strategy came to be considered.

News of disaster in the West Indies first reached England in the spring of 1795. Following the evacuation of Guadeloupe and the beginning of the Carib revolt in the Windward Islands, the British Government decided that only the despatch of a second major expeditionary force from home would retrieve the

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661. Dundas' advice to Spencer was not altogether altruistic. He and Middleton were not only distantly related by blood; there was a strong mutual sympathy which boded ill for Spencer.

662. Melville Castle Muniments: Scottish Record Office: GD. 51/2/31: Middleton to Dundas, December 27, 1794.

situation. The decision was correct, but both in its planning and execution the expedition met difficulties and opposition never encountered by its predecessor in 1793/4.

By 1795, the war had widened in range and complexity and the demands made upon the country's naval and military resources had risen accordingly. There were not sufficient troops available at a time when the areas of operation had multiplied.[663] The task of mounting a second major effort in the West Indies within eighteen months - with all the cost in men, money and supplies which that implied - had therefore to be weighed against commitments elsewhere. Thus, although the need to protect the West Indian colonies continued to be recognized, the prospect provoked strong opposition in the Commons and disunity in the Cabinet.

Dundas remained the champion of further colonial expeditions in preference to all other strategies, a policy which still received Pitt's full support. But increasingly in Cabinet the Secretary for War found himself bitterly opposed by Grenville and Windham. To the latter in particular, there seemed only one way to strike decisively against the enemy - by launching a

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663. A year later, during a speech in the House of Commons, Dundas admitted a major cause of the disastrous situation in the West Indies in 1795 had been the failure and delay in sending reinforcements from the United Kingdom in time. He blamed commitments elsewhere, especially the decision to send an expedition to seize the Cape of Good Hope. 'The Times', April 29, 1796, pp. 1 - 2. B.M. Newspaper Library, Colindale.

direct attack on the French coast and act in conjunction with the Royalists. For a time, these views prevailed over Dundas' violent opposition, and the Quiberon expedition was launched in July 1795. It was only after its abyssmal failure that the Cabinet reverted to the situation in the West Indies.

Even had Quiberon succeeded, Dundas' convictions would not have changed: 'Either with a view to peace or war, and whatever may be the success of His Majesty's arms elsewhere, a compleat success in the West Indies is essential for this country ... no success in other quarters will palliate a neglect there; by success in the West Indies alone you can be enabled to dictate the terms of peace ... '.[664] He held unwaveringly to this view at a crucial Cabinet meeting held on August 14th.[665]

Judging by the length of the minutes which have survived, the meeting was protracted and stormy, but in the end Dundas and the "colonialists" carried the day. It was agreed that immediate preparations should be made for offensive operations both in the Leeward Islands and San Domingo. In the case of the former, the early reconquest of Guadeloupe and St Lucia were considered essential, for which 15,000 regular troops would

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664. B.M. Add.MSS 40102: Dundas Papers (1794 - 1805), ff. 8 - 9: Dundas to the Duke of York, July 20, 1795.

665. Attended by the full Cabinet, except for the Lord President of the Council (Mansfield). Those present were: Pitt, Dundas, Lord Chancellor (Loughborough), Grenville, Chatham, Portland, Spencer, Cornwallis, Windham & Hawkesbury.

be required. A second force of 12,000 would be needed to gain possession of the strategic posts and harbours along the coast of San Domingo. At the meeting Dundas pressed for a major effort against San Domingo, to reinforce the British troops already there since their efforts had been brought to a standstill by disease and the nature of the terrain. If only a small force were sent, the French would remain in control of their main base at Cap François and constitute a dangerous threat to Jamaica and the Windward Passage. As he pointed out in a letter to the King enclosing the Cabinet minute, anything less than possession of the ports and harbours on both sides of the island would be quite inadequate.[666]

Even after the Cabinet had reached a decision, much anxiety and doubt remained over the size and scope of the expedition. Where were 27,000 troops to be found, without jeopardizing operations elsewhere or even the safety of Britain itself? The King flatly refused to allow 3,000 of the Brigade of Guards to join the expedition and had serious misgivings about the entire project: ' ... I cannot but think it greatly exceeds our resources. The truth is we attempt too many objects at the same time, and we forget for them that we must keep some force

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666. A. Aspinall: "The later correspondence of George III": vol. II, pp. 380 - 381: Dundas to the King, August 15, 1795, enclosing the Cabinet minute of the previous day.

at home'.[667] His was not the only criticism; at the Admiralty, Middleton unerringly exposed the strategic weakness which underlay the plan: ' ... a system of unlimited conquest that cripples us everywhere and diverts the Fleet from its natural course.'[668]

Serious difficulties, too, arose over the expedition's objectives in particular the order of priority. It has been said that the Cabinet envisaged a two-pronged attack, simultaneously delivered against San Domingo and the enemy garrisons in Guadeloupe and St Lucia. But when the practical planning began at the Admiralty and War Office, it soon became obvious that the expedition would have to remain cohesive and concentrate upon achieving one objective before passing on to the next. The whole force would have to be convoyed across the Atlantic under strong naval escort to its landfall at Barbados, whence the campaign could begin.

At once the problem of priority gave rise to divergences of opinion. Middleton rightly put the re-occupation of Guadeloupe as the prime strategic necessity: 'If Guadeloupe is made the object of attack, it cannot possibly hold out, and if it is taken the other islands in French possession cannot

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667. A. Aspinall: "The later correspondence of George III": vol. II, p. 348: the King to Dundas, August 19, 1795. Ann Arbor MSS, Michigan.

668. Spencer Papers (Navy Records Society): vol. I, part i - General Correspondence: pp. 51 - 52: Middleton to Spencer, July 1, 1795.

subsist of themselves ... '.[669] Abercromby was of the same mind. He told Pitt in July that, because the enemy had been able to get reinforcements to Guadeloupe in spite of the blockade, its recapture was fundamental to the security of the entire British Antilles.[670] In spite of his having been at the Admiralty only a short time, Spencer, too, grasped the whole problem, as is shown by an able memorandum he prepared in August. In favour of attacking San Domingo first, he noted:

- the added security its full possession would give to Jamaica.
- the greater safety given to the important trade using the Windwoard Passage.
- the importance of such a large and prosperous colony as a bargaining counter in future peace negotiations.

In favour, on the other hand, of attacking Guadeloupe first there had to be considered:

- the serious threat its continued possession by the French had upon all the British Leeward colonies and Dominica to the south.
- the inability of the naval blockade to prevent supplies and reinforcements reaching Guadeloupe.
- its major importance as an enemy privateer base.[671]

At this stage, in mid-August, Spencer had not made up his mind. Unfortunately, by September, other counsels and Dundas' in particular had prevailed. In a second memorandum written

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669. Spencer Papers (Navy Records Society): vol. I, part ii - Abercromby/Christian expedition: plans and preparation - pp. 149 - 150: Middleton's appreciation of the West Indies' expedition, August 25, 1795.

670. PRO 30/8: Chatham Papers, vol. 107, part i: Abercromby to Pitt, July 17, 1795.

671. Spencer Papers ... vol. I, pp. 139 - 140: memorandum by Spencer: August 1795.

that month, Spencer very reluctantly gave San Domingo the preference.[672] There is evidence that he did so against his better judgement[673] and only after Dundas' insistence upon the economic importance of San Domingo. Moreover, in giving way, Spencer saw that any chance of capturing Guadeloupe after the conclusion of operations against San Domingo must be a remote possibility. Lack of troops, fever casualties, the shortness of the campaign season and the formidable nature of the San Domingo operation - all argued against it.

Dundas, however, never doubted for a moment which should come first. The wealth of San Domingo and the effect its possession would have upon British influence in the Caribbean, glittered temptingly before him, blinding every strategic consideration. By September1795, therefore, he had ensured, by gaining Pitt's full support, that the expedition's main object would be to further operations against San Domingo, as soon as control had been restored in the Windward Islands. So it was that the vital attack upon Guadeloupe was postponed and ultimately abandoned.

While the problems over where to attack first continued to be argued, an even more serious situation began to develop

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672. Spencer Papers (Navy Records Society), vol. I, pp. 223 - 227.

673. Ibid.: ' ... with the enemy in possession of Guadeloupe, it cannot be too often repeated ... that a naval defensive war cannot under those circumstances be carried on with success on that station'.

over the choice of the expedition's naval commander. Spencer's handling of the matter and the repercussions which followed, led to a major crisis in Admiralty and Cabinet in the autumn of 1795 and bitter recriminations throughout the fleet

Two thoughts were uppermost in Spencer's mind when he began to consider the appointment. It was essential to select an admiral who would both work happily with the army commander and understand the complex transport arrangements of the expedition. In the first case, Spencer was guided as a precedent by the admirable co-operation which had been displayed by Grey and Jervis during the 1793/4 expedition.[674] Moreover, he had already made up his mind who was the most suitable naval officer to meet the second requirement. But at the end of July, before his decision was announced, the army as the prime mover of the expedition named its commander. Dundas chose Lieutenant-General Sir Ralph Abercromby,[675] an able, experienced but prickly soldier, who certainly had no intention of sharing control of the expedition with anyone. Thus a third factor forced its way into Spencer's calculations - the realization that Dundas and Abercromby were clearly determined that the military side should predominate. It was brought home to Spencer that in order to achieve the harmony so fundamental to

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674. See chapter 1, pp. 24 et seq.

675. Biographical details in: D.N.B. I, pp. 43 - 46.

the expedition's success, he would have to accept the fact that the naval commander should play the subordinate role, in a manner never contemplated during the Grey/Jervis expedition.

At the beginning of August, Spencer announced the appointment of Rear-Admiral Sir Hugh Clowberry Christian,[676] whose past experience with the Transport Board and proven ability during the expedition's initial preparations, suggested the right qualifications. But very serious objections, the importance of which were quite unappreciated by Spencer at the time, outweighed the advantages. Christian was then only forty-eight and a very junior rear-admiral in the Navy List, having just got his flag in the promotion of June 1st, 1795.[677] Many more senior admirals could stake a prior claim to the command. Moreover, it was known that while serving with the Transport Board, Christian had become a close friend of William Huskisson, whom Dundas had appointed Under-Secretary of War in March 1795 and entrusted with superintending the preliminary arrangements for the expedition. Resentment was aroused at the Admiralty and amongst senior officers in the Fleet by whispers that in making the appointment, pressure had been put upon Spencer by Dundas, through Christian's association with his protegé,

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676. Biographical details in: DNB, iv, pp. 278 - 279; Ralfe, ii, pp. 265 - 270; Naval Chronicle, vol. xxi, p. 177.

677. Admiral Christian's previous service career was: flag-captain to Commodore Rowley (1778 - 1780); three frigate actions (1780 - 1782); second captain to Admiral Howe (1790 - 1793).

SIR HUGH CLOBERRY CHRISTIAN, K.B

Rear Admiral of the White Squadron

Published March 31. 1809. by J. Gold. 103. Shoe Lane. London.

Huskisson.

An even greater difficulty over Christian's selection - namely the effect it would have upon the position of the naval commander already at the Leeward Islands - was overlooked, and here again Spencer failed to appreciate the serious consequences which would follow. Whereas General Abercromby would clearly be the senior army commander in that theatre, the existing station admiral there, Admiral Sir John Laforey, was immensely senior to Christian. Although at the time of the appointment Spencer made no definite statement as to the position of Laforey, both Dundas and Abercromby were later to claim that they had got the clear impression from him that, when the expedition reached the Leeward Islands, Laforey would transfer to the Jamaica station and take over the command there.[678, 679] This would leave Abercromby free to work with Christian, without any risk of interference by a more senior naval officer. Although Spencer later denied having ever suggested that Laforey should leave his command, there is conclusive evidence supporting the claims of Dundas and Abercromby, in the shape of an Admiralty memorandum prepared by Spencer on August 25th.[680]

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678. Dundas Papers (National Library of Scotland): MS/1075 (c), f. 16: Dundas to Spencer, October 20, 1795.

679. Melville Castle Muniments (do.): MS/ 3835, f. 130: Abercromby to Dundas, October 22, 1795.

680. Reproduced in: Barham Papers (Navy Records Society), vol. III, pp. 2 - 5.

This document clearly states that as soon as the expedition reached the Caribbean, it was the First Lord's intention that Laforey should embark in one of its battleships and: ' ... proceed and take the command on the Jamaica station'.[681]

Suddenly in September, Spencer changed his mind. He saw Christian at the Admiralty and told him that as soon as he reached the Leeward Islands, he was to place himself under Laforey's command.[682] Spencer informed neither Dundas nor Abercromby of the change. Why this happened is not clear. But Middleton was absent through illness from the Admiralty for several weeks about the time Spencer appointed Christian and decided on Laforey's transfer to Jamaica. It is very probable that when Middleton returned to duty, he made it clear to the new First Lord the serious objections to the transfer. In particular, he pointed out the impossibility of replacing Admiral William Parker, the station commander at Jamaica, by Laforey, just in order to make room for Christian.

Matters came to a head in October, with a flurry of correspondence and angry exchanges between Spencer, Dundas and Abercromby. Nine letters written in as many days (October 12th to October 22nd), indicate the extent of ill-feeling which the dispute had aroused. On October 11th, there was a stormy

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681. Reproduced in: Barham Papers (Navy Records Society), vol. III, intro. p.x.

682. Mentioned by Christian in a letter to Evan Nepean, first Secretary of the Admiralty, September 24, 1795. ADM 1/3[illegible] IN letters.

meeting between Spencer and Dundas. In the course of it Spencer admitted that he had changed his mind but, face to face with Dundas, he refused to commit himself about what was to be done about Laforey. It was not until the following afternoon that he fully explained his attitude in a long letter to Dundas.[683]

Admitting at the outset that his views of the problem had changed since their meeting the previous day, Spencer explained why he now had second thoughts about the recall of Laforey: ' ... I do not feel, on reflection, that it would be justifiable to supercede an Admiral so high on the list as Sir John Laforey without having a direct charge to produce against him, more especially in order to replace him by so very young a flag officer as Christian, who from his standing in the List of Admirals can certainly not be considered as equal to a command of such an extent ... '[684] Clearly, Spencer had at last begun to feel the weight of disapproval at the Admiralty and in the fleet. He closed his letter to Dundas on October 12th, with a stout defence of Laforey: ' ... were the chief[685] command in the Leeward Islands to be entrusted to Christian,

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683. National Library of Scotland: Uncat. MSS - acc. No. 2553, f. 164: Spencer to Dundas, Admiralty, 4.30 p.m., October 12,1795

684, 687, 688. National Library of Scotland: Uncat. MSS - acc. No. 2553, f. 164: Spencer to Dundas, October 12, 1795.

685. Spencer's own underlining in the manuscript.

all its senior officers ... would have just cause to complain and the officer now there, though old and therefore perhaps a little less active than one could wish, is however perfectly acquainted with that station,[686] and would be unprecendently and unjustly degraded in the eyes of the whole service'.[687] Having made this stand, Spencer still faced a dilemma: how to avoid a clash which clearly might arise between Christian, as naval commander of the expedition, and Laforey, as resident station admiral. In his letter to Dundas, he could only suggest that clear instructions be given to both, defining their separate functions.[688]

Dundas was alarmed and angry by Spencer's letter. He replied the same evening evidently in great haste, since it is known that Spencer's letter was not sent off from the Admiralty until after 5 o'clock that afternoon.[689] Dundas began by telling Spencer that he had received many independent reports of Laforey's incapacity and unpopularity in the West Indies and warned him not to ignore public opinion. Describing the dangers of a divided command, he pointed out that both

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686. Laforey was in his second term as commander-in-chief of the Leewards station. His first appointment there ran from 1789 to 1793 and his second began in June 1795. See chapter 1, pp.

687, 688. See footnotes previous page.

689. See Spencer Papers (N.R.S.) vol. I, p. 168, footnote.

Abercromby and himself had taken it for granted that Laforey would be transferred to Jamaica in order that the entire responsibility over the expedition in the theatre would rest with the two commanders appointed. He ended his letter with a strong note of warning to Spencer: '... one thing is obvious that the problem must be immediately decided with the intention of its being communicated to Abercromby and he be permitted to judge for himself; for I am sure if he entertains the smallest apprehension of being involved in any dispute with the department of the Navy, no consideration on earth will induce him to risk his reputation by the command, and if he will not ... you have not another to call upon to undertake it ... '.[690] As the crisis worsened, Dundas' determination that Abercromby's wishes should be the deciding factor, became increasingly obvious. The reasons are not far to seek. As he had said in his letter, Abercromby was unquestionably the best soldier for the command and therefore must at all costs not be deterred from taking it. Moreover as Secretary for War, Dundas was personally involved in the success of the expedition. It was an open secret that he favoured the military element of the project at the expense of the naval; therefore he would not allow anything to stand in the way of that

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690. Dundas to Spencer, evening of October 12, 1795. Reprinted in: Spencer Papers (Navy Records Society), vol. I, pp. 168 - 170

side of the operation.

At this critical juncture, Abercromby came upon the scene and his attitude shattered any faint hopes which remained, of Spencer and Dundas being able between them to reach a compromise solution to the problem. Having studied the letters which had passed between Spencer and Dundas on October 12th, Abercromby wrote in high dudgeon to Dundas four days later.[691] He condemned the fact that a matter of such great public importance had remained so long undecided and concluded by bombarding Spencer's compromise solution with a salvo of explosive questions: ' ... Is not Christian deprived of the fleet now in the West Indies, should Laforey be of the opinion that it should be otherwise employ'd? Is not the whole unity of design and execution destroyed by this divided command?'[692]

The general was undoubtedly correct there. However neatly the Spencer solution, devised in London, might seem to get over the difficulties, it was an invitation to disaster as soon as the expedition reached the Caribbean. On October 20th, Abercromby completed his intervention in the affair by writing to his friend Huskisson at the War Office. He told him that the dispute had become so involved and distasteful, his

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691. Abercromby to Dundas, October 16, 1795. Reprinted in: Spencer Papers ... pp. 171 - 172.

692. Ibid. Abercromby's views were repeated, with even greater force, in a second letter to Dundas on October 22. See: Melville Castle Muniments: National Library of Scotland. MSS/3835, f. 17.

acceptance of the command was in the balance and would have to await the outcome of events.[693] This letter was probably shown by Huskisson to his superior in the department, Dundas.

Already by October 18th, the ripples of the dispute had widened. In a private conversation with Dundas that day, Pitt spoke of his uneasiness;[694] he saw the unfavourable publicity Spencer would incur if Laforey was recalled. Even more serious in his opinion, was the risk of an open breach between the services.[695] Under the threat of the whole matter getting out of hand, Pitt ordered that his prior approval be obtained before any final decision was taken.

On October 19th, Spencer made a last attempt to persuade Dundas and Abercromby to agree to his compromise solution. He was clearly very surprised at the vehemence of Abercromby's reaction and, in a letter to Dundas that day, tried to answer the general's objections point by point.[696] Spencer maintained that the proposed relationship between Christian and Laforey had been totally misunderstood by Abercromby and that in any case it was not the root of the matter, which was Christian's

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693. WO 1/789: Abercromby to Huskisson, October 20, 1795. (War Office IN-letters - Transport Office (1794 - 1797)).

694. Mentioned by Dundas in his letter to Spencer, October 18, 1795.

695. Ibid. Dundas described Pitt's chief anxiety as being the: ' ... feeling that the services still remain in danger of collision ... '

696. Spencer Papers (Navy Records Society), vol. I, pp. 173 -176

junior status as an admiral. In support of his argument he added: ' ... had I supposed it was necessary at the outset of the expedition that the admiral who was to concert it with Abercromby would supersede Laforey as commander-in-chief in the Leeward Islands, I should certainly not have proposed Christian for this situation ... '.[697] This statement by Spencer does not stand up to scrutiny. It will be recalled that in his earlier memorandum of August 25th,[698] the intention had been to transfer Laforey to Jamaica in order to make way for the expedition's arrival. Before that memorandum was written, Spencer had already nominated Christian. Had all gone according to plan, therefore, it is quite clear that Spencer fully intended that Christian should take over as commander-in-chief. The best that can be said for Spencer's statements in this letter of October 19th, are that they reflect his own desperation. In the middle of a situation much of his own making, he realized that the climax had come and was prepared to throw everything into the scales.

Hard as he strove to retrieve the situation, Spencer was forced to recognize matters were getting beyond his control. He concluded his letter to Dundas on October 19th, by saying that the dispute would have to be resolved by a meeting of

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697. Spencer Papers (Navy Records Society), vol. I, p. 175.

698. q.v. ante, p. 319.

the Cabinet.[699] Less than a day later came Dundas' reply, in a long and closely-argued letter which brought Spencer no comfort.[700]

The Secretary for War at once demolished the idea of resorting to Cabinet: 'It is a subject on which you cannot expect any Cabinet minister will give an opinion. The responsibility rests with you and you must act upon it ...'.[701] He added that Pitt also did not hink the business appropriate for the Cabinet to discuss. Dundas then went on to reiterate all the arguments against creating a divided command in the Leewards, mentioning in particular Abercromby's strong feelings on the subject. The way in which Dundas presented the situation was most cunningly contrived. The following passage in his letter, for instance, seemed to offer the First Lord of the Admiralty a wide range of choice in solutions to the dilemma: ' ... you have it in your power either to allow the service to remain on the footing now proposed, or to leave Laforey in the command without any restriction, or to recall Laforey, or to supersede both Laforey and Christian and to name another senior admiral to go out ...' .[702]

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699. Spencer Papers (Navy Records Society), vol. I, p. 176: Spencer to Dundas, October 19, 1795.

700, 701, 702. National Library of Scotland - Dundas Papers: MS / 1075, part c: West Indies (1791 - 1819, f. 16: Dundas to Spencer, October 20, 1795.

But it was an empty offer. As both Dundas and Spencer well knew, the supercession of both admirals at that stage would have brought ridicule to the Admiralty. Neither could the 'footing remain as proposed', nor Laforey be left in command, owing to Abercromby's strong objections. In order, moreover, that Spencer should be fully aware of his complete support for Abercromby, Dundas added emphatically: 'Be the result what it will, I shall not acquiesce in his declining the command, but send him His Majesty's orders to proceed on the service.'[703] Far from giving Spencer full freedom of choice this crucial letter shows Dundas, with the support of Pitt and Abercromby, bringing heavy pressure to bear on Spencer, in order to force the decision they required - namely, that he should give way and recall Laforey.

On October 22nd, Spencer capitulated and the reply he wrote to Dundas on that day is in many ways a humiliating document. The copy which has survived is a heavily-corrected draft, which testifies to the strain he was then undergoing.[704] Spencer did not attempt to conceal his anger both with Dundas for telling him how to administer the Admiralty, and with Abercromby for his comments on the choice of naval commander.

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703. Dundas' own underlining in the manuscript.

704. Spencer Papers (Navy Records Society), vol. I, pp. 179 - 182: Spencer to Dundas, October 22, 1795.

Understandably sensitive of what might be said later, he went out of his way to emphasize it was not they who had forced him to retreat. The day before he wrote to Dundas, Spencer discussed the whole subject of the West Indies command with the Prime Minister. No record of their conversation has survived, but it is clear from Spencer's letter that Pitt was able to exert a timely and moderating influence upon the dispute.

Valuable though his advice was, it is also very apparent that Spencer only gave way with the greatest reluctance. Too late, he became aware of the deep sense of resentment felt by the Admiralty and the navy at the threat to Laforey's position. But in the dilemma he now found himself, he could see no other way out: ' ... but that I must revert to the determination of removing Laforey as the only means of securing a cordial co-operation of the two branches of the service on this very important occasion. Laforey will therefore be ordered to return with some of the line-of-battle ships now on that station and Christian will therefore remain in the command of the intended expedition ... '.[705] Thus the individual was sacrificed in the hope of achieving unity for the expedition.

Then, and for many years afterwards, Spencer blamed

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705. Spencer Papers (Navy Records Society), vol. I, p. 181.

Abercromby for what had happened. Neither he, nor any other military officer, had, Spencer felt, the right to refuse a command on the grounds that his naval counterpart on an expedition was not to his liking. He was certainly correct on that point; but, in the final analysis, the main blame lay with Spencer himself. It was he who chose Christian, without first obtaining expert advice from his subordinates, especially Middleton, at the Admiralty. It was his inexperience of naval custom and tradition which caused him to ignore the effect the appointment would have upon the position of Laforey.

Even Spencer's final decision did not bring the dispute to an end. While satisfactory to his political colleagues and the army, it produced an immediate and lasting crisis at the Board of Admiralty. Notwithstanding the bitter feelings aroused there and throughout the fleet, Spencer had hoped in his position as First Lord, to obtain conformity to the decision. He reckoned, however, without the determination of Middleton. In this issue, Middleton was not only the champion of the navy against the army; he had regarded Laforey for many years as a close personal friend. The day after reaching his decision, Spencer wrote to Middleton giving the reasons why he had done so.[706] He ended his letter by saying

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706. Barham Papers (Navy Records Society), vol. II, pp. 418 - 420: Spencer to Middleton, October 23, 1795.

that, since the expedition's preparations were nearly complete and sailing orders would shortly have to be given to Christian, the order for Laforey's recall should immediately be prepared at the Admiralty and signed by each member of the Board.[707]

Middleton was disgusted at this ultimatum. Months later, he described it to Spencer's predecessor as a: ' ... bullying letter unbecoming the rank and office of the writer ...'.[708] Sure of his ground, Middleton considered that he had done everything in his power to dissuade his superior from taking the irrevocable step. He knew how unjust it was to Laforey and how unprecedented an action it would be regarded in the service.[709] Twice he had drawn Spencer's attention to Laforey's professional ability and great reputation in the Navy, mentioning a particularly gallant exploit which had won him fame.[710] But Spencer's letter had trampled over these considerations and Middleton's immediate retort was to have nothing to do with the order: ' ... I have put your letter into Mr. Nepeans's[711] hands ... my reputation is too much

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707. Barham Papers (Navy Records Society), vol. II, p. 420.

708. Chatham Papers: PRO 30/8 - vol. 365, part i, ff. 135 - 136 Middleton to Chatham, November 8, 1795.

709. Ibid ... f. 136.

710. When Laforey had been picked by Admiral Boscawen to board an enemy 74 in Louisbourg harbour with boats, July 25, 1758.

711. Sir Evan Nepean (1751 - 1822), First Secretary of the Admiralty, March 1795 - January 1804.

concerned to take an active share in the business ... '.[712]

Spencer was taken aback by the vehemence of Middleton's reaction, but wrote again to him on Sunday night October 25th, in a final effort to obtain his concurrence.[713] While admitting that matters would have stood very differently had his refusal rested on personal considerations alone, Spencer regarded Middleton's attitude as a direct challenge to his authority. Smarting under Dundas' suggestions that he had been shirking his responsibilities, the First Lord was in no mood to accept the dictates of a subordinate. He therefore demanded that Middleton sign the order of Laforey's recall, as a public duty and in obedience to himself.[714]

The response was swift and immediate. ' ... No consideration on earth will induce me to concur in what I think an unjust measure ... as your lordship seems to insinuate a removal from office, I can only say that my seat is at your lordship's service'.[715] To avoid any possibility of misunderstanding, Middleton wrote a second letter the same day tendering his resignation.[716]

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712. Spencer Papers (Navy Records Society), vol. I, pp. 182 - 183, Middleton to Spencer, October 23, 1795.

713. Ibid ... p. 183.

714. Barham Papers (Navy Records Society), vol. II, pp. 421 - 422, Spencer to Middleton, October 25, 1795.

715. Spencer Papers ... vol. I, p. 183: Middleton to Spencer, October 26, 1795.

716. Ibid ... Same to same, October 26, 1795. (second letter).

Thus the crisis over the Leeward Islands command led to serious repercussions within the Admiralty itself. The departure of Middleton left the inexperienced First Lord without a naval adviser of the first rank. Spencer certainly knew what he was losing, because he twice tried without success to persuade him to change his mind.[717] But Middleton was not to be moved, ending the final letter of their correspondence with the words: ' ... I shall certainly quit my seat with more pleasure than I came into it'.[718] After his resignation, Middleton was appointed chairman of the commission to enquire into the Civil Affairs of the Navy and continued to act in that capacity for several years. In private, he lost no time or opportunity in condemning Spencer's administration. To both Chatham and Dundas,[719, 720] he described his constant exclusion from important Admiralty business, and the existance of "an interior cabinet of Admiralty",[721] whose members discussed together and made the decisions before they ever reached the Admiralty Board. His resignation was the

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717. Melville Castle Muniments (Scottish Record Office): GD/51/2/36-1: Middleton to Dundas, undated. Barham Papers (Navy Records Society), vol. II, pp. 423 - 424: Spencer to Middleton, October 26, 1795; and Middleton's reply, October 27.

718. Ibid, p. 424.

719. Chatham Papers: PRO 30/8, vol. 365, part i, ff. 135 - 136: Middleton to Chatham, November 8, 1795.

720, 721. Barham Papers, vol. II, pp. 424 - 430: a long memorandum from Middleton to Dundas, November 9, 1795.

climax of a long-felt sense of injury, for not having been treated by Spencer or the junior Lords of the Admiralty with the consideration which his age and official experience entitled him to expect. The Laforey dispute was thus the occasion, but not the cause, of his departure.

The crisis over the naval command and Middleton's resignation did not mark the end of the expedition's troubles. For six months - between October 1795 and March 1796 - Cabinet, Admiralty and War Office wrestled with a succession of problems and setbacks, which effectively destroyed the impetus and direction of the original plan. It has been said that in August 1795 the Cabinet envisaged sending 15,000 troops to the Leeward Islands, and simultaneously a second force of 12,000 to San Domingo. By October it was plain that commitments elsewhere - operations in Holland and off the French coast and especially the decision to send an expedition to seize the Dutch colony at the Cape of Good Hope - had consumed part of the available manpower. The expedition's scale had to be modified. Although Dundas clung to the original plan - pressing Grenville to find ways of getting soldiers from Germany[722] - Pitt was persuaded by both Abercromby and Christian that, to undertake simultaneous operations in the Leewards and

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722. Dropmore Papers (H.M.C.: Fortescue MSS), vol. III, p. 102: Dundas to Grenville, October 17, 1795.

San Domingo with a reduced expeditionary force was out of the question.[723] They suggested that 5,000 troops and part of the naval squadron, originally destined for San Domingo, should be diverted to Barbados in order to reinforce Abercromby in the Leeward Islands. In this way control of Guadeloupe and St Lucia might well be regained within two months. Meanwhile the rest of the San Domingo expedition would garrison the posts already held there, until the arrival of the main force would enable its conquest to be completed during the remainder of the campaign season. Pitt agreed to these proposals and in November requested Spencer and Dundas to supervise a revision of the expedition's plan.[724] Because time was short, this could be done without reference to Cabinet. The instructions were duly altered, although Dundas regretted the necessity.

Even the modified plan depended for success upon its prompt execution. But here fresh difficulties arose. Although Admiral Christian hoisted his flag at Spithead on September 15th serious failures in the military and transport arrangements postponed departure. On Octiber 24th, Grenville received a letter from his brother, who described the delay as scandalous:

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723. Melville Castle Muniments (Scottish Record Office): GD/51/1/675 - Pitt to Dundas, November 21, 1795.

724. Ibid.

' ... I understand and from the best authority, that there is no confidence whatsoever in Abercromby's army ... the ordnance are still unprepared; when I last heard from Portsmouth only three of their ships from the river had got round ...'[725] When two weeks later the expedition had still not sailed, Dundas gave vent to his anger and impatience: ' ... I really feel it a disgrace to the executive government of this country . that an expedition determined on six months ago should not be in a state to sail seven weeks after the appointed time.'[726]

A chapter of accidents and disorganisation lay behind the failure to get away. It had been realized at the outset that the availability of shipping would be a major problem. Only 40,000 tons could be got together by the Transport Board in England, although the expedition's minimum requirements, including victuallers and ordnance-vessels, was for 100,000 tons of shipping. The balance had to be found from the incoming East and West Indies trade and nothing could go forward at Portsmouth until they arrived. The West Indiamen were very late; although their owners had promised the Transport Board the ships would be available by the end of August, various circumstances intervened. Most of the ships, having discharged

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725. Dropmore Papers (H.M.C.: Fortescue MSS), vol. III, p. 142: Buckingham to Grenville, October 24, 1795.

726. WO/ 6/5: Dundas to Abercromby, November 3, 1795.

their cargoes in the Thames, did not complete the turn-round until the end of September and several were held up in the Downs until October 19th.[727] As a result, the embarkation of Abercromby's 16,000 troops at Portsmouth was not completed until November 2nd, although they had been assembled there ready to board since October 15th. Moreover, a second mishap occurred over the expedition's twenty-four storeships and ordnance vessels. They had collected at Woolwich and completed loading there by October 20th. For some reason the Portsmouth section did not weigh until the 25th, reaching the Downs on November 2nd. There it was delayed over a week by contrary winds and did not arrive at Portsmouth until November 10th, many days late.[728]

With the exception of two undermanned ships which had to be left behind, the whole expedition of 183 sail at last got under way from Spithead on November 14th. Two days out, it was struck by a furious gale in the Channel. The convoy was scattered; although some ships sailed on independently to the West Indies, many were badly damaged or sunk and over two hundred bodies were washed ashore at Lyme Bay.[729] Christian

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727, 728. B.M. 9771. f. 7: "Facts relative to the conduct of the War in the West Indies, collected from the speech of the Rt. Hon. Henry Dundas in the House of Commons on 28 April, 1796 ... "; London; J. Owen; 1796. pp. 41 - 44; 47; 49 - 50; 53 - 54.

729. P.R.O. ADM 1/317, f. 71: Christian to Nepean, November 18, 1795.

struggled back to Portsmouth on November 29th and Dundas posted down there to inspect the damage for himself.[730] The King was as perturbed as anyone by the disaster. On receiving Dundas' report from Portsmouth, he suggested further delay would be avoided if the two sections of the expedition, at Portsmouth and Cork, were instructed to make their own way to the West Indies as soon as they had been re-equipped.[731] On December 9th the main expedition sailed again from Portsmouth, but met a second gale; for several weeks Christian fought to make headway against the westerly winds. But in the end, they and sickness and lack of water on board the ships beat him and the convoy straggled back to harbour on January 26th, 1796.[732] This further setback compelled a drastic revision in the whole scheme of operations.

Abercromby saw at once that too much time had been lost for the campaign to be completed as originally intended by June 1796. If operations in the West Indies had only begun by then, it was courting disaster if: ' ... 20,000 to 30,000 men were to remain idle there during the sickly season'.[733]

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730. Dundas Papers (National Library of Scotland): Uncat. MSS 2553, f. 174: Spencer to Dundas, November 26, 1795.

731. Ann Arbor MSS Michigan: Dundas, at Portsmouth, to the King, and his reply, November 23/24, 1795. Quoted in A. Aspinall: "The later correspondence of George III", vol. II, pp. 429 - 430.

732. P.R.O. ADM 1/317: Christian to Nepean, January 28/29, 1796.

733. Melville Castle Muniments (National Library of Scotland): MSS 3835: Abercromby to Dundas, January 31, 1796.

Moreover, the repeated delays made the Cabinet reconsider the whole West Indies prospect. After a Cabinet meeting held on January 2nd, Pitt and Dundas came to the conclusion that, since part of the campaigning season in the Caribbean had been lost, the expedition's overall objectives would have to be limited still further. They decided, therefore, that once control of the Leeward Islands had been regained, San Domingo should become the main objective and the plan to attack Guadeloupe be postponed indefinitely.[734] To this end, Abercromby was ordered to proceed imeediately to the Leewards in a fast frigate ahead of the main expedition, with instructions to commence operations there in conjunction with Laforey and the local forces.[735]

At the Admiralty, Spencer had also to revise his plans as a result of the expedition's failure to start. Christian's second return to Portsmouth gave him an opportunity to try to make amends for the Laforey fracas. In February 1796, Spencer nominated Vice-Admiral Sir William Cornwallis[736] to the naval command of the expedition in succession to Christian. Moreover, he was instructed to take command of the Leewards station

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734. H.M.C.: Dropmore Papers (Fortescue MSS), vol. III, pp. 166 - 168: Pitt to Grenville, January 3, 1796.

735. P.R.O. WO / 6/5 : Dundas to Abercromby, February 3, 1796.

736. Biographical details in: D.N.B. IV, pp. 1169 - 1172.

as soon as the expedition reached the Caribbean.[737] Spencer could hardly have made a more unfortunate choice. Cornwallis was a senior and experienced officer, but not easy to manage; in particular, he had a rooted antipathy to the army and detested its encroachment upon the affairs of the navy. Throughout February, Cornwallis addressed a stream of complaints to the Admiralty about the expedition's preparations, in dealing with which Spencer showed great patience.

At last, on February 29th, the long-delayed expedition put to sea only to meet bad weather for the third time. In the middle of the gale, Cornwallis' flagship collided with one of the transports and, although the convoy was able to proceed on course across the Atlantic, he had to return to Portsmouth with the Royal Sovereign.[738] Anxious that there should be no further delays, the Admiralty ordered Cornwallis to shift his flag to the frigate Astraea and sail at once to Barbados. This Cornwallis refused to do, pleading ill-health and the unsuitable impression which would be created by his arriving to take up a new command in a small frigate. This was the final straw to Spencer; he curtly told Cornwallis that he had

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737. Laforey had vacated the command in December, 1795, but died on board his flagship the day she arrived back at Portsmouth.

738. See the "Times" leader of March 31, 1796, p. 2. The name of the transport was the Belisarius, and the "Times" of April 9, 1796, pp. 3 - 4, for an account of the court-martial. B.M. Newspaper Library, Colindale.

been discharged as commander-in-chief and ordered his court-martial. The court, which took place at Portsmouth on April 4th, found the admiral guilty of errors of judgement in returning to port without orders and in not shifting his flag to another ship, but not guilty on the all-important charge of disobeying the order to proceed in the frigate. Although thus acquitted, Cornwallis shortly afterwards struck his flag and was not re-employed until after Spencer had left the Admiralty.[739]

It was a direct consequence of this unpleasant affair, that when the expedition did ultimately begin operations in the Leeward Islands during the summer of 1796, they were jointly directed by Abercromby and Christian.[740] By the end of the campaign season, a certain measure of success had been achieved; control had been regained over the islands of St Lucia, Grenada and St Vincent. But this was by far the least important of the three main objectives which the Cabinet had set the expeditionary force in its directive of August 1795.[741] All the delays, frustrations and changes of plan which have been described thus combined with fatal results to prevent the achievement of the two which really mattered -

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739. Cornwallis Papers (COR/4): Nat. Mar. Mus. MSS Dept.

740. See chapter I, pp. 53-4.

741. q.v. ante, p. 311-2.

the conquest of San Domingo and the recapture of Guadeloupe.

From 1796 onwards, growing frustration and disillusionment clouded the earlier hopes of achieving decisive success in the Caribbean. Following the expedition's failure to gain its principal objectives, subsequent events showed a pattern of steady decline, culminating in the withdrawal from San Domingo in the autumn 1798. The causes of failure in the theatre itself have already been examined.[742] But events in Europe were as powerful a contributory cause.

The political attitude of Spain was a prime factor. Her traditional jealousy towards the activities of other nations in the West Indies was well-known. Neither Pitt nor Grenville were in any doubt as to the effect expeditions against San Domingo, or anywhere else in the West Indies, would have.[743] Such activity was construed at Madrid as a threat to Hispaniola, Cuba and Trinidad. Nevertheless, so long as Spain and Britain remained allies against France, the situation had no worse effect than to keep relations cool. But in 1795 and 1796 there were dramatic changes.

The Franco-Spanish peace treaty, signed at Basle on July 22nd, 1795, dealt a fatal blow to British strategy in the West

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742. See chapter 2, pp. 109; 112.

743. For example, in the Foreign Office records: FO / Spain, vol. 27: Grenville to St. Helens (the ambassador at Madrid), July 19, 1793: 'The chief bar to Anglo-Spanish friendship is the jealousy at Madrid about the West Indies ... ' .

Indies and heralded the eclipse of the San Domingo campaign. Although Spain did not declare war until fifteen months later, the treaty, "inter alia", ceded Hispaniola - the Spanish half of the island of San Domingo - to France, in return for her recognition of certain Spanish claims along the Biscay coast. At once the French forces and negro insurgents fighting in San Domingo were given a back-door and a supply line. At once the task of the British expedition there became heavier. Dundas clearly recognized the serious implications of the treaty when he admitted that: ' ... it must have considerable influence on future operations of the war in San Domingo.'[744] Pitt also realized what would be the effect of releasing for service elsewhere, large numbers of French troops then guarding the Hispaniola border.[745]

British diplomacy in the months which followed sought to retrieve the position. Grenville advised the ambassador in Madrid to assure the Spanish government that despite the rapprochement with France, Britain did not seek a rupture with her, nor had she designs upon Mexico or Buenos Ayres.[746, 747].

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744. P.R.O.: WO 6/5: Dundas to Williamson, August 3, 1795.

745. Chatham Papers: P.R.O. 30/8, vol. 101, ff. 135 - 136: Pitt to Chatham, August 3, 1795.

746. FO / Spain: vol. 37 - Grenville to Bute, December 25, 1795

747. FO / Spain: vol. 42 - same to same, June 18, 1796.

Pitt made numerous overtures to the Spanish chief minister, Godoy, but they were rejected.

Events crowding in upon each other and the Government's distractions elsewhere provided other reasons for the West Indies no longer holding the central stage after 1796. The Cabinet's attention in 1797 was focussed at home upon the threats of invasion and the landings at Fishguard and Bantry Bay; Spencer and the Admiralty Board had their hands full with the naval mutinies at Spithead and the Nore. Moreover, Pitt's first tentative attempts to negotiate peace with France in 1797 had a decisive effect upon the purpose and scope of further operations in the Caribbean. Henceforth, all future acquisitions - the occupation of Dutch Guiana (1796), Trinidad (1797), Curaçao (1800) and the Danish and Swedish Caribbean possessions (1801)[748] - were to be made predominantly for their value as bargaining counters at the peace conference table.

Complete failure in San Domingo, its appalling cost in lives and money, was however the main reason for disengagement in the West Indies. The decision to end the campaign in mid-

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748. A. Aspinall: "The later correspondence of George III", vol. III, p. 533: Earl St Vincent (Spencer's successor at the Admiralty) to the King, May 10, 1801 - describes the occupation of the islands of St Thomas, St John and St Croix (Danish); St Bartholomew (Swedish); and St Martin (Dutch and French). Of course an additional reason for their occupation was because they were major centres of privateering and illicit trade. For this aspect, see chapter 5, pp. 225-6.

1798 coincided with the Navy's recovery of command in the Mediterranean. Thereafter the main strategic effort was concentrated there. Only minor operations were undertaken in the West Indies during the last three years of the war and the defence of the British colonies rested solely on the efficacy of the naval blockade of the Western Approaches.

Even as ardent a disciple of colonial aggrandizement as Dundas, was ultimately shaken by the reverses in San Domingo. As early as December 1796, he admitted to Spencer that the future of the whole campaign was being reconsidered by Pitt and himself.[749] Six months later an important debate took place in the Commons, on the motion of Mr. St. John for withdrawing the troops from San Domingo.[750] The major speeche came from St. John himself, Dundas, Wilberforce and Fox. In proposing the motion, St. John quoted figures of casualties and expenditure which were in his opinion the strongest reasons for withdrawal. Seven thousand five hundred men had died up to the end of September 1796, only a fraction by the sword. The cost of the campaign had soared from £296,000 in 1794, to £2,211,000 in 1796 and £700,000 in January 1797 alone.[751]

749. Spencer Papers (Navy Records Society), vol. III, pp. 294 - 295: Dundas to Spencer, December 3, 1796.

750. Cobbett: "Parliamentary History of England ... to the year 1803"; Hansard; 1817. Vol. xxxiii, pp. 576 - 593: House of Commons debate, May 18, 1797.

751. Ibid p. 579.

His most telling point was the meagre results obtained at such high cost. After a four-year campaign, with the exception of Port-au-Prince, only three places on the island had been added to the gains made during the initial landings.

In his reply, the Secretary for War was hard pressed to rebut the arguments. He spoke at length of the economic importance of the island, especially in sugar production, and the greater security its possession would give to Jamaica and the Windward Passage. Dundas thereby gained the support of the colonial planter and merchant element in the Commons, but, with the exception, he was addressing a hostile and critical audience. Although he felt it necessary to oppose the motion, Wilberforce[752] found serious fault with Dundas' views. He did not agree that San Domingo was a source of great strength to the enemy; their extreme republicanism had reduced the island to a state of utter desolation. Fox then rose to vehemently attack Dundas' Caribbean strategy. His rooted opposition to all colonial expeditions was well-known, but in this particular debate he concentrated upon the Government's lack of planning and gross wastage in San Domingo.[753] Although

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752. William Wilberforce (1759 - 1833), the philanthropist and abolitionist. For biographical details, see D.N.B. xxi, pp. 208 - 217, esp. p. 211.

753. The figures quoted by Fox differed somewhat from St John's - 9,000 casualties, including deserters and financial costs of nearly £4,500,000 - but the net result was the same.

the motion was negatived at the division by 116 votes to 31, the Government had prevailed because of the weakness of the Foxite Opposition and not through the support of the House. The debate had revealed a real sense of uneasiness and alarm.

Although the actual withdrawal did not occur until late in 1798,[754] Pitt and Dundas reluctantly concluded, six months after the Commons debate, that it would be disastrous to persist with the campaign. That the financial cost rather than the wastage of lives had finally persuaded them, is proved by Dundas' words at that time: 'The subject of San Domingo is a very difficult one; it clearly exceeds all the bounds of expense we had resolved upon, and what the country either can or will bear ... '.[755]

The end of the San Domingo campaign exposed the ineffectiveness of the overseas strategy advocated by Dundas. Thereafter, he and Pitt faced greater opposition in the Cabinet than in the Commons. The Cabinet was much less united than it had been.[756] Some of Dundas' colleagues - notably Grenville and Windham - openly stated their lack of confidence in Dundas' capacity as Secretary for War.[757] Both Windham, and Burke in

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754. See chapter 2, pp. 113-4.

755. Dropmore Papers (H.M.C.: Fortescue MSS), vol. III, pp. 390 - 391: Dundas to Grenville, November 8, 1797.

756, 757. A. Aspinall: "The later correspondence of George III" vol. III, introduction, pp. xiv - xv. The same source reprints a memorandum by Dundas to Pitt, September 22, 1800, on the subject of the Cabinet, in which he spoke of differences of opinion: ' ... which daily enter into every separate discussion which occurs on the subject of either peace or war'.

opposition, made scathing censures upon the strategy employed in the West Indies and Pitt's readiness to sacrifice the islands which had been won there, as a means of opening peace negotiations with France. As Burke put it: 'Mr. Pitt is unfortunately in the condition of "paulo purgante". He cannot make peace and he will not make war.'[758]

Aware of the hostility against him in the Cabinet and shortly after the disastrous concludion of the Helder campaign, Dundas wrote to Pitt in November 1799 asking to be relieved of the responsibility for the War Department.[759] He added that he thought Chatham should replace him and Spencer be removed from the Admiralty. Pitt immediately rejected these extraordinary proposals and was able, after a good deal of pressure, to persuade Dundas to remain in office.[760]

Dundas made one final attempt to resurrect the Caribbean as a major theatre of war.[761] In July, 1800 he prepared an

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758. The Windham Papers (edited by the Earl of Rosebery; 2 vols. 1913), vol. II, p. 45: Burke to Windham, February 12, 1797.

759. Aspinall ... vol. III, p. 293, footnote 4: Dundas to Pitt, November 4, 1799.

760. Chatham Papers. PRO 30/8, vol. 157, f. 112: Pitt to Dundas, November 4, 1799.

761. Even after his threat to resign, Dundas continued to plead with Pitt for his agreement to more colonial expeditions, in preference to other forms of strategy. See B.M. Add. MSS/ 40102, f. 40: Dundas to Pitt, March 22, 1800.

elaborate plan for the capture of Spanish-held Cuba.[762, 763] The island's value, he saw, lay not only in its strategic and economic importance within the Caribbean but as a gateway to South America. He believed that as well as becoming one of the Empire's richest colonies, it would open up the trade of an immense continent for the import of British manufactures and export of tropical produce. Moreover, his plan envisaged the capture of Cuba being followed by operations against Buenos Aires, as a means of access to the rich provinces of the interior.[764]

The expedition would need 20,000 infantry, one cavalry regiment and 1,200 negro auxiliaries and Dundas proposed that the main force, under the command of General Abercromby, should sail from Gibraltar in the early part of October 1800 and effect a junction with the Black Corps in the Windward Islands.[illegible] The theoretical merits of the Cuba plan were however quite destroyed by its impracticability. Whatever the long-term benefits, there was no possibility of the men or materials for such a large expedition being forthcoming in 1800, at a time when every available soldier was needed to defend the home

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762. Melville Castle Muniments (Scottish Record Office): GD 51/1/725/1: Secret memorandum by Dundas, July 22, 1800.

763. B.M. Add. MSS/ 40102: Dundas Papers: Memorandum, July 1800

764. Ibid.

country. Dundas appeared quite incapable of understanding this, because, even after the plan had been flatly rejected by the Cabinet and vetoed by Pitt, he sought to enlist the King's support, quite unsuccessfully.[765]

After the rejection of the Cuba plan, the Government's remaining interest in the Caribbean until the Peace of Amiens in March 1802, centred upon the future of the British conquests there and their disposal at the conference table. Even before the peace treaty, their fate had been settled by the terms of the preliminary treaty, signed in London on October 1st, 1801. In the closing months of 1800, Dundas had become seriously alarmed at the prospect of all the hard-won gains in the West Indies being sacrificed in the interests of securing peace.[766] He regarded the negotiations being undertaken by Pitt and Grenville with well-founded suspicion. The fact that the trend of Grenville's diplomacy envisaged the restoration to France and Holland of all their colonial possessions except Ceylon and the Cape of Good Hope, filled him with dismay. To his mind, the Foreign Secretary had given no thought to the effect upon the balance of power in the Caribbean:

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765. A. Aspinall: "The later correspondence of George III", vol. III, pp. 401 - 402, Dundas to the King, August 26, 1800.

766. Dropmore Papers (H.M.C.: Fortescue MSS), vol. VI, pp. 37 - 38: Dundas to Grenville, November 24, 1800. ' ... my feeling is that no end of the war can justify such a resolution'.

' ... If Holland is to have restored to it the colonies of Surinam and Demerary, Domingo at the same time being an open colony ... no part of the colonial trade there, that of Jamaica excepted, will remain with this country. It will all pass into the hands of France, Holland and America.'[767]

With the fall of Pitt's ministry in March 1801 and the accession of Addington, Dundas' worst fears were realized. By the Preliminary Treaty of Peace signed eight months later, Britain handed back all her colonial conquests except Ceylon and Trinidad, neither of which had been French. The costly and bitter campaigns in the West Indies were ultimately for nothing. Pitt, out of office, did not seem disheartened by the peace terms, but Dundas and Spencer openly condemned the restoration of the enemy colonies. Having broken with Pitt, the King had little choice but to support and approve Addington's methods of negotiation. Privately he was very disappointed; only a year before, he had told Pitt that no peace terms could be considered satisfactory, which did not secure most of Britain's conquests, particularly the Cape of Good Hope and the West Indian islands.[768]

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767. Dropmore Papers (H.M.C.: Fortescue MSS), vol. VI, pp. 37 - 38: Dundas to Grenville, November 24, 1800: ~~'... my feeling is that no end of the war can justify such a resolution'~~.

768. A. Aspinall: "The later correspondence of George III", vol. III, introduction, p. xxii.

Perhaps the most important defence of the British Government's Caribbean strategy during the period came from its chief protagonist, Dundas. During a Commons debate on the State of the Nation on March 25th, 1801, he looked back on the underlying factors determining the decisions which had been taken.[769] In his speech, he stressed that the nation's small army had prevented large-scale operations in Europe, particularly a direct attack on France. On the other hand, the power of the Navy and Britain's dependence on commerce and overseas empire clearly argued the adoption of a maritime and colonial strategy. Moreover, if such were undertaken, the French colonial possessions would be seized, her overseas trade ruined and new markets opened up for British manufactures.

The situation in the West Indies in 1793 exactly corresponded with the requirements of Dundas' strategic doctrine.[770] In the war years which followed and despite all the disasters, Dundas never wavered in his belief that the West Indies was the decisive theatre of war. But the longer the struggle went on, the clearer it became that his strategic doctrine was wrong. The enemy could not be destroyed by conquering her Caribbean islands; even without the possession of naval power in the theatre, she and her allies survived there.

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769. Cobbett: Parliamentary History. vol. xxxvi, pp. 1071 - 1072.

770. His viewpoints are also summarised in: Spencer Papers (N.R.S.), vol. III, intro., pp. viif - x.

Nor did France depend upon her colonies for supply for their produce. Indeed the war showed her to be remarkably self-sufficient economically, and colonial losses were more than offset by conquests in Europe. But the most telling condemnation of Dundas' strategy lay in the appalling casualties suffered by the army and navy during the campaigns. It was their sacrifice for so little gain which finally brought home the folly of the entire strategy.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

LIST OF NAVAL COMMANDERS-IN-CHIEF IN THE CARIBBEAN, 1793 - 1802

(a) LEEWARD ISLANDS STATION

May 1790 - May 1793	Vice-Admiral Sir John Laforey
May - October 1793	Rear-Admiral Alan Gardner
October 1793 - November 1794	Vice-Admiral John Jervis
November 1794 - June 1795	Vice-Admiral Benjamin Caldwell
June 1795 - April 1796	Admiral Sir John Laforey (second term)
April - June 1796	Rear-Admiral Hugh Cloberry Christian
June 1796 - July 1799	Rear-Admiral Sir Henry Harvey
July 1799 - July 1800	Rear-Admiral Lord Hugh Seymour
July 1800 - December 1801	Rear-Admiral John Duckworth

(b) JAMAICA STATION

January 1793 - February 1795	Commodore John Ford
February 1795 - May 1796	Rear-Admiral William Parker
May - July 1796	Commodore John Duckworth
July 1796 - July 1800	Vice-Admiral Sir Hyde Parker
July 1800 - September 1801	Vice-Admiral Lord Hugh Seymour

A P P E N D I X 2

T H E A D M I R A L T Y: 1788 - 1794

1. Lords of the Admiralty (6)

July 1788	August 1789	January 1790	June 1791
Apsley	Hopkins	Hopkins	Perceval
Perceval	Perceval	Perceval	Hood
Leveson-Gower	Hood	Hood	Townshend
Hopkins	Belgrave	Belgrave	Gardner
Pratt	Drake	Townshend	Smyth
Hood	Townshend	Gardner	Pybus

April 1793	May 1794
Perceval	Perceval
Hood	Hood
Gardner	Gardner
Smyth	Affleck
Pybus	Pybus
Affleck	Middleton

2. Secretaries of the Admiralty

First: June 1763 - March 1795: Philip Stephens

Second: January 1783 - March 1795: John Ibbetson

3. Comptroller of the Navy

1778 - 1790: Sir Charles Middleton

1790 - 1794: Sir Henry Martin

4. Treasurer of the Navy

1783 - 1800: Henry Dundas

APPENDIX 3

THE ADMIRALTY

During Pitt's First Administration - second phase : July 1794 - February 1802

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1. LORDS OF THE ADMIRALTY (6)

December 1794	March 1795	November 1795	July 1797	September 1798	July 1800	February 1801
Perceval	Perceval	Perceval	Perceval	Perceval	Perceval	Stephens
Hood	Pybus	Pybus	Seymour	Stephens	Stephens	Eliot
Gardner	Middleton	Seymour	Stephens	Gambier	Gambier	Troubridge
Affleck	Stephens	Stephens	Gambier	Young	Young	Adams
Pybus	Seymour	Gambier	Young	Wallace	Man	Markham
Middleton	Gambier	Young	Wallace	Man	Eliot	Garthshore

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2. SECRETARIES OF THE ADMIRALTY (2)

First Secretary : June 1763 - March 1795 : Philip Stephens
March 1795 - January 1804 : Evan Nepean

Second Secretary : January 1783 - March 1795 : John Ibbetson
March 1795 - January 1804 : William Marsden

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3. COMPTROLLER OF THE NAVY

1790 - 1794 : Sir Henry Martin
1794 - 1802 : Sir Andrew Hamond

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4. TREASURER OF THE NAVY

1783 - 1800 : Henry Dundas

APPENDIX 4

THE CABINET

Pitt's First Adminstration - First phase :

July 1788 - July 1794

	July 1788	June 1789	June 1791	June 1792	January 1793	July 1794
Prime Minister	Pitt	Pitt	Pitt	Pitt	Pitt	Pitt
Lord President of the Council	Camden	Camden	Camden	Camden	Camden (1)	Fitzwilliam
Lord Chancellor	Thurlow	Thurlow	Thurlow	-	Loughborough	Loughborough
Lord Privy Seal	Gower	Gower	Gower	Gower	Gower	Spencer
Home Secretary (incl. Colonies)	Sydney	Grenville	Dundas	Dundas	Dundas	Portland (2) (3)
Foreign Secretary	Carmarthen	Carmarthen (4)	Grenville	Grenville	Grenville	Grenville
First Lord of the Admiralty	Chatham	Chatham	Chatham	Chatham	Chatham	Chatham
Commander-in-Chief, Army	-	-	-	-	Amherst	Amherst
Master General of Ordnance	Richmond	Richmond	Richmond	Richmond	Richmond	Richmond
President of Board of Trade	-	-	Hawkesbury	Hawkesbury	Hawkesbury	Hawkesbury

(1) Died April 1794.
(2) Dundas assuming the newly-created office of Secretary for War.
(3) Windham coming into the Cabinet as Secretary of War.
(4) Created Duke of Leeds in March 1789.

APPENDIX 5: BRITAIN - VALUE OF OVERALL TRADE WITH BRITISH WEST INDIES

£000

	1780	1790	1792	1794	1796	1798	1800
(a) IMPORTS FROM:-							
Jamaica	1,541.6	2,082.5	2,029.2	2,537.0	2,011.5	2,653.9	3,612.5
Antigua	57.1	104.8	116.4	235.3	193.5	141.1	224.0
Barbados	120.4	170.1	298.8	245.6	295.4	372.0	286.7
Montserrat	44.7	52.1	49.8	35.5	32.9	69.0	70.7
Nevis	45.8	50.4	63.9	52.7	63.6	59.6	67.2
St. Kitts	323.4	175.7	175.8	205.6	188.7	190.9	261.3
Tortola	49.0	43.0	88.1	95.9	66.2	80.1	28.7
Grenada	318.0	407.7	269.6	377.4	85.7	185.6	2 07.0
Dominica	162.4	246.7	339.0	280.5	290.4	275.2	288.4
St. Vincent	103.4	150.8	197.6	210.4	70.0	203.6	217.9
St. Lucia	137.2	18.6	-	59.6	5.3	-	54.4
Tobago	78.9	-	-	43.7	105.0	133.1	138.5
Trinidad	-	4.2	-	27.5	23.6	70.6	146.8
Honduras	1.5	96.2	54.9	23.6	3.0	6.6	10.1
Demarara (Guiana)	-	-	-	-	233.4	529.3	1,054.1
(b) EXPORTS TO:-							
Jamaica	727.7	858.1	1,144.1	1,820.4	1,458.6	2,845.6	1,901.3
Antigua	106.7	92.0	147.5	115.0	104.5	198.0	80.2
Barbados	254.8	186.2	247.0	255.0	421.1	369.7	240.4
Montserrat	11.1	6.5	26.4	14.0	46.7	28.9	41.9
Neris	17.7	30.3	31.3	27.6	45.3	40.0	13.5
St Kitts	207.6	90.7	144.7	96.3	83.5	112.4	57.5
Tortola	25.4	36.2	71.8	104.9	104.8	126.5	92.1
Grenada	42.3	133.1	262.5	218.0	85.3	109.2	86.0
Dominica	31.8	76.5	138.8	97.3	54.5	59.5	41.8
St Vincent	66.2	73.8	206.0	148.1	95.8	149.5	80.9
St Lucia	54.0	-	-	11.9	-	5.7	10.6
Tobago	27.9	-	-	79.4	92.1	71.6	40.5
Trinidad	-	2.0	17.8	-	13.5	93.1	98.4
Honduras	-	12.5	21.2	3.2	-	0.2	2.3
Demerara (Guiana)-		-	-	-	36.6	220.8	360.4

Source: P.R.O. BT 6/185: 'State of the Trade of Great Britain in its Imports and Exports ... '

APPENDIX 6: BRITAIN - IMPORTS FROM BRITISH WEST INDIES, 1793 - 1797

Main Commodities by individual island

Source: P.R.O. : CUSTOMS - 17/15; 17/16; 17/17; 17/18; 17/19.

a) MUSCOVADO SUGAR

m.lbs.	Antigua	Barbados	Dominica	Grenada	Jamaica	Montserrat	Nevis	St Kitts	St Vincent	Tobago	Tortola	Total British West Indies
1793	202.0	137.9	64.2	195.6	1033.2	35.1	57.5	155.9	134.1	44.9	54.9	2115.3
1794	155.4	130.2	52.6	199.7	1154.7	23.2	39.3	146.2	128.6	-	67.3	2097.2
1795	119.6	107.2	37.7	28.3	1086.5	22.1	47.8	128.2	57.5	69.0	36.4	1871.0
1796	133.0	130.6	45.5	11.5	1089.2	22.0	48.6	142.1	39.8	80.0	53.4	1715.7
1797	114.9	89.7	49.1	13.5	1049.5	19.9	50.9	85.3	67.2	76.6	54.4	1594.2

b) MOLASSES
hogsheads

1793	373	34	10	235	78	-	9	182	3639	-	-	4564
1794	244	-	-	436	11	-	132	389	582	-	-	1789
1795	-	-	-	94	-	-	155	157	9	174	-	610
1796	-	10	-	94	-	-	-	462	-	61	-	567
1797	-	-	-	-	296	-	-	-	-	-	-	296

c) RUM
000 gallons

1793	247.9	95.0	24.8	34.7	3027.0	31.9	98.0	93.7	128.1	2.2	13.5	3756.8
1794	143.8	44.6	21.8	202.9	2182.6	17.4	19.2	70.0	85.3	-	19.0	2806.6
1795	3.5	3.6	25.7	7.8	1722.2	12.9	12.1	39.7	2.6	15.1	0.3	1877.2
1797	35.8	2.2	3.5	1.0	1490.9	7.0	33.4	16.3	3.4	79.3	1.3	1595.0

d) COFFEE
000 lbs.

1793	-	0.6	40.0	14.0	29.0	-	-	2.5	2.9	-	-	89.0
1794	0.6	1.8	26.5	6.5	94.0	-	-	0.4	2.5	-	-	132.6
1795	1.3	1.0	29.2	1.1	82.1	-	-	2.5	0.4	-	-	181.3
1796	0.6	2.2	31.6	3.8	39.2	-	-	-	-	1.3	0.8	78.3
1797	0.2	7.8	30.4	2.8	67.8	-	-	3.3	0.6	0.1	6.1	119.1

e) COTTON
000 lbs.

1793	75.5	1152.0	386.4	2595.7	2163.4	98.0	6.8	309.0	812.0	176.1	467.6	8242.5
1794	94.7	1389.4	392.5	1880.1	2096.6	52.1	3.9	272.6	612.3	n.a.	691.3	7485.5
1795	117.0	3829.8	120.8	2328.5	2416.5	70.6	-	328.0	640.1	339.3	-	*12431.3
1796						n.a.						
1797	97.9	2151.2	205.3	1071.9	937.3	26.7	27.9	368.1	390.1	80.3	470.0	5746.3

f) HARDWOODS (including logwood, lignum, lignum vitae, mahogany and nicaragua)

tons						Foreign West Indies	Honduras					
1793	46	25	71	53	3762	404	4701	51	10	-	232	4196
1794	-	-	4	43	3406	541	3170	4	4	-	64	3530
1795	6	-	58	3276	5290	6190	3923	14	6	-	50	8783
1796	-	-	-	-	6180	107	891	11	-	-	91	6282
[illegible]	[illegible]	-	-	8	5537	n.a.	n.a.	-	16		75	5680

g) DYEWOODS (including fustic, indigo)

tons												
1793	92	324	14	300	2543	718	310	99	56	-	211	3654
1794	54	-	45	94	2043	326	161	106	-	-	301	2648
1795	111	-	24	67	1528	464	51	4	-	-	155	1817
1796	12	-	-	-	740	228	70	2	-	-	56	811
1797	29	-	2	-	661	126	n.a.	-	-	-	20	714

APPENDIX 7: MOLASSES

(a) CANADA : Imports from BWI and elsewhere, 1783 - 1790

000 Gallons

By	Duty	1783	1784	1785	1786	1787	1788	1789	1790
British or Canadian ships	3d/gallon	57.4	35.9	126.0	131.7	212.1	161.3	113.8	-
Other ships	6d/gallon	54.7			19.5			21.6	33.3

Source: Co 45/11 (quoted in G.S. Graham: 'British Policy and Canada', pp. 138-9)

(b) BRITISH WEST INDIES : Exports, 1787

000 Gallons

	Jamaica	Antigua	St Kitts	Nevis	Virgin Is.	Barbados	Grenada	St Vincent	Dominica
Total:	6.4	5.9	8.2	1.3	2.0	13.5	4.3	9.7	18.1
To U.K.:	2.3	3.5	8.2	1.3	2.0	1.1	0	9.7	17.4
To U.S.A.:	1.8	1.7	0	0	0	0.7	0	0	0.5
To B.N.A.:	2.3	0.7	0	0	0	11.7	4.3	0	0.2

Source: Edwards ... I, 286-7; 350-1; 586-7.

(c) AVERAGE LONDON PRICES, 1790-9

Per cwt, in bond

Shillings/cwt	1790	1791	1792	1793	1794	1795	1796	1797	1798	1799
High	21/9	28/8	25/3	30/-	28/3	38/-	37/-	37/3	-	39/6
Low	18/6	23/-	25/-	24/-	23/-	25/3	32/6	33/-	-	29/-

Source: From quarterly returns published by Messrs. Smiths, Nash & Kemble and quoted in: House of Commons sessional paper (1807) III, (65), p. 78.

APPENDIX 8 : RUM

(a) BRITAIN : VOLUME OF IMPORTS AND RE-EXPORTS

000 Gallons

	1780	1790	1792	1794	1796	1798	1800	1802
Imports	1,621.2	2,361.3	3,027.0	2,926.9	2,814.4	4,271.5	3,602.2	4,765.3
Re-exports	820.6	680.0	577.3	982.5	434.4	323.1	1,462.4	n.a.

Source : Schumpeter.... table xvii

(b) BRITISH WEST INDIES : EXPORTS

000 Gallons

Year	Antigua	St Kitts	Nevis & Montserrat	Virgin Islands	Barbados	Grenada	St Vincent	Dominica	Jamaica	Tobago	Total B.W.I.
1787	716.5	334.6	289.1	21.4	415.5	670.4	88.2	63.4	2,543.0	-	-
1798	180.3	170.6	113.4	53.1	75.3	117.5	142.4	53.7	2,948.6	354.8	4,196.2

Source : Edwards ... I, 350-1,392, 430, 447, 506-7; II, 601

(c) BRITAIN : IMPORTS FROM JAMAICA AND REST OF B.W.I., 1797 - 1803

Puncheons

	1797	1798	1799	1800	1801	1802	1803
Jamaica	8,216	17,279	12,491	13,954	14,908	15,089	15,438
Rest of B.W.I.	1,170	6,652	3,155	3,678	5,258	9,755	6,178

Source: P.R.O. : Co 45/11, ff. 84 and 87

APPENDIX 9: COFFEE

(a) GREAT BRITAIN : IMPORTS & RE-EXPORTS, 1780; 1790 - 1800

000 cwt

	1780	1790	1791	1792	1793	1794	1795	1796	1797	1798	1799	1800
Imports	30.9	55.7	45.3	69.0	93.7	201.2	319.0	331.3	331.9	396.1	390.2	575.2
Re-exports	24.0	29.2	33.5	58.6	86.2	157.0	306.6	326.3	309.3	394.8	381.5	526.8

Source: Schumpeter ... table xvii

(b) JAMAICA : EXPORTS, 1787 - 1800; 1802

m.lbs

	1787	1788	1789	1790	1791	1792	1793	1794	1795	1796	1797	1798	1799	1800	1802
Source (a)	1.2	1.6	1.8	2.4	2.8	3.6	4.6	6.0	7.1	7.9	-	-	-	-	-
Source (b)	-	-	-	2.0	2.2	2.5	3.9	4.9	6.8	7.5	7.0	7.9	12.1	11.2	18.1

Sources: (a) Edwards ... I, 315
(b) Ragatz.

(c) WINDWARD ISLANDS : EXPORTS, 1787

000 cwt

FROM	TOTAL	to U.K.	to U.S.A.	to B.N.A.
Grenada	8.8	8.6	0.2	-
St Vincent	0.6	0.6	-	-
Dominica	18.1	17.4	0.5	0.2

Source: Edwards ... I, 392; 430; 447

Select Tables to illustrate volume; value and prices

(a) IMPORTS INTO ST VINCENT, 1794 - 1805

	Scale	from U.K.	from B.N.A.	from U.S.A. (in U.K. ships)	from U.S.A. (in U.S. ships)
Staves	000	24.0	129.5	1122.3	7025.0
Hoops	000	3830.1	142.0	17.0	384.9
Lumber	000	0	940.5	466.0	34237.0
Bread & flour	000 bbls.	16.3	3.4	15.1	67.0
Beef & pork	000 bbls.	23.6	1.2	0.4	15.4
Dry fish	000 quintals	2.5	110.8	0.5	28.2
Pickled fish	000 bbls.	19.9	5.8	1.2	6.4

Source: CO 260/21, quoted in Ragatz

(b) VALUE AND NATURE OF IMPORTS INTO JAMAICA, 1787

From	Value £000	Commodities
U.K. direct	758.9	British manufactures (686.7); Foreign merchandise (72.3)
Ireland	138.5	especially provisions, linen.
Africa	213.8	including 5,345 negroes at £40 each.
British North America	30.0	including 20,000 quintals of salted cod from Newfoundland.
U.S.A.	190.0	including Indian corn; wheat, flour, rice, lumber, staves.
Madeira	15.0	500 pipes of wine at £30 each.
Foreign West Indies	150.0	under Free Port trade: cottonwool; cacao; livestock; indigo; hides; hardwoods; tortoiseshell; dollars.
Total	1496.2	

Source: Edwards... I, p.289

(c) DOMINICA - RISING PRICES OF FOODSTUFFS IN WARTIME

Shillings/barrel	1793[1]	1795[1]	1797[2]
Mess beef	148/6	198/-	330/-
Mess pork	165/-	214/-	330/-
Flour	115/6	148/6	148/6

Sources 1. CO 260/14: Governor Seton to Portland, May 22, 1797

2. CO 71/24

(d) BRITISH WEST INDIES- IMPORTS OF PROVISIONS FROM BRITAIN, 1803 - 5

	Beef & Pork bbls.			Butter cwt.		
	1803	1804	1805	1803	1804	1805
All British West Indies	7965	24113	19440	4218	7502	5672
Jamaica	4580	10612	11673	628	1762	594
Barbados	1504	6979	3473	1528	3444	2036
Demerara	351	1589	992	54	635	577
Trinidad	92	984	93	294	75	66

Source: BT 6/141: Customs House accounts (1780 -1805

APPENDIX II: THE FREE PORT TRADE

(a) Entries & Clearances from the Caribbean Free Ports during 1793

		Antigua		Dominica		Grenada		Jamaica		Barbados		St.Vincent		Tobago		Bahamas	
		No.	000t														
Spanish settlements	IN	-	-	26	0.7	185	4.9	449	18.9	-	-	-	-	-	-	67	1.9
	OUT	-	-	23	0.6	300	12.6	437	18.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	76	2.2
French settlements		-	-	18	0.3	36	0.9	52	1.9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	19	0.3	31	1.0	52	1.8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dutch settlements		-	-	5	0.2	8	0.3	5	0.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	8	0.2	12	0.3	8	0.4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Danish settlements		5	0.2	7	0.2	5	0.1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		5	0.2	8	0.2	13	0.3	9	0.3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Swedish settlements		1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		1	-	1	-	5	0.2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total at the Free Port		6	0.2	57	1.4	234	6.3	508	21.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	67	1.9
		6	0.2	57	1.4	361	14.4	507	20.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	76	2.2
American vessels under proclamation		-	-	46	4.1	-	-	-	-	37	3.7	38	3.5	21	2.7	81	6.2
		-	-	44	3.8	-	-	30	1.8	17	1.8	23	2.1	34	4.0	75	4.2
Total of Foreign vessels		6	0.2	103	5.5	234	6.3	508	21.1	37	3.7	38	3.5	21	2.7	148	8.2
		6	0.2	101	5.3	361	14.4	537	22.3	17	1.8	23	2.1	34	4.0	151	6.4

Source: P.R.O. - CUSTOMS 17/15, f. 55

(b) 'An account of the number of Spanish vessels... which have entered inward in the several ports of Jamaica, commonly called the Free Ports, in the three half-years ending 5th July 1787, 1788 & 1789'

From	1787 Number	1787 tons	1788 Number	1788 tons	1789 Number	1789 tons
Cuba	25	545	39	843	44	1,195
SanDomingo	19	713	34	1,348	25	837
Carthagena	9	390	2	100	3	155
Santa Martha	4	150	1	40	1	16
Mississippi	5	335	1	50	3	180
Rio de la Hacha	2	95	4	190	2	55
Coro	2	180	3	145	2	30
Trinidada	-	-	5	47	1	6
Curracoa	-	-	-	-	2	120
Porto Cavella	2	212	1	63	-	-
Other small ports	2	55	8	296	1	55
Total	70	2,595	98	3,122	84	2,649

Source: P.R.O. : BT 6/76 - Miscellanea, West Indies : Leeward Islands (1787-91), f.47

SHIPPING RETURNS - GENERAL : 1778; 1784-1801

(1) 'Account of number of vessels... Entered inwards and cleared outwards in the several ports of England...'

Source: P.R.O. : BT 6/185: 'Navigation of Britain...'

		INWARDS				OUTWARDS			
		British Ships		Foreign Ships		British Ships		Foreign Ships	
YEAR	FROM/TO	No.	000t	No.	000t	No.	000t	No.	000t
	West Indies	519	87.0	2	0.5	397	73.7	1	0.3
1778	North America	334	59.3	1	0.2	357	47.9	1	0.2
	West Indies	497	106.2	Nil	Nil	422	88.2	4	0.7
1784	North America	514	92.6	110	18.1	575	85.4	102	17.4
	West Indies	590	130.7	2	0.3	484	104.6	0	0
1785	British North America	252	28.2	0	0	353	41.7	0	0
	U.S.A.	220	39.5	120	20.6	211	38.1	112	20.3
	West Indies	513	106.7	0	0	417	83.9	0	0
1786	British North America	192	23.1	0	0	363	40.6	0	0
	U.S.A.	184	33.8	129	22.3	159	30.2	118	18.3
	West Indies	506	120.3	1	0.07	454	110.4	0.	0
1787	British North America	228	27.4	1	0.1	514	51.3	1	0.2
	U.S.A.	227	44.6	136	22.9	165	36.3	129	21.5
	West Indies	546	134.3	1	0.08	452	111.2	2	0.5
1788	British North America	231	33.0	0	0	467	68.6	0	0
	U.S.A.	184	38.0	158	25.6	165	35.7	149	24.2
1789	West Indies & North America	1051	212.5	180	29.6	1183	239.9	162	27.4
	British West Indies	498	123.8	0	0	426	109.3	0	0
1790	British North America	209	26.2	0	0	373	46.1	0	0
	U.S.A.	269	55.5	226	42.1	188	40.6	202	37.2
	Foreign West Indies	11	1.6	0	0	6	0.8	0	0
	British West Indies	532	129.5	0	0	459	114.1	0	0
1791	British North America	239	30.5	0	0	369	49.3	0	0
	U.S.A.	201	44.7	297	58.9	192	43.5	272	52.6
	Foreign West Indies	40	8.3	1	0.2	34	8.3	0	0
	British West Indies	544	130.5	0	0	482	121.8	0	0
	British North America	211	30.1	0	0	351	47.2	0	0
1792	U.S.A.	163	35.9	291	60.3	176	41.6	264	56.0
	Foreign West Indies	19	3.3	0	0	4	0.4	0	0
	British West Indies	590	139.6	0	0	453	114.4	0	0
	Foreign West Indies	16	2.6	1	0.2	2	0.3	0	0
1793	British North America	132	17.8	0	0	265	34.3	0	0
	U.S.A.	114	26.3	311	65.9	27	7.1	263	56.0
	British West Indies	571	136.0	0	0	572	143.6	0	0
	Foreign West Indies	17	3.5	0	0	2	0.6	0	0
1794	British North America	147	18.2	0	0	274	35.0	0	0
	U.S.A.	10	1.9	231	50.6	44	9.7	300	64.3
	British West Indies	480	119.5	0	0	348	99.0	0	0
	Foreign West Indies	22	4.0	1	0.3	2	0.6	10	2.1
1795	British North America	180	25.1	0	0	219	29.1	0	0
	U.S.A.	12	2.1	367	74.2	10	2.1	450	89.7
	Conquered Islands	102	24.1	0	0	53	11.5	0	0

APPENDIX 12 (contd.)

YEAR	FROM/TO	INWARDS British Ships No.	INWARDS British Ships 000t	INWARDS Foreign Ships No.	INWARDS Foreign Ships 000t	OUTWARDS British Ships No.	OUTWARDS British Ships 000t	OUTWARDS Foreign Ships No.	OUTWARDS Foreign Ships 000t
				-	-				-
	Foreign West Indies	26	5.0	4	0.9	2	0.2	11	2.4
1796	British North America	139	18.1	-	-	138	30.6	-	-
	U.S.A.	4	0.8	474	101.1	9	1.5	467	99.8
	Conquered Islands	113	29.6	8	1.6	125	26.4	2	0.4
	British West Indies	383	104.9	-	-	419	117.5	-	-
	Foreign West Indies	11	1.9	7	1.5	4	0.5	4	0.7
1797	British North America	188	29.9	-	-	216	30.4	-	-
	U.S.A.	9	1.9	371	81.8	16	3.6	336	73.5
	Conquered Islands	194	48.3	-	-	175	38.4	-	-
	British West Indies	457	128.3	-	-	446	124.5	-	-
	Foreign West Indies	14	3.1	2	0.5	2	0.4	2	0.5
1798	British North America	118	17.9	-	-	208	28.1	-	-
	U.S.A.	18	4.1	297	67.7	29	6.4	296	69.0
	Conquered Islands	198	44.2	1	0.2	229	50.6	-	-
	British West Indies	604	165.6	-	-	488	140.5	-	-
	Foreign West Indies	52	11.0	5	1.0	5	1.1	2	0.4
1799	British North America	136	22.7	-	-	199	30.1	-	-
	U.S.A.	27	6.6	316	69.9	43	11.4	332	74.2
	Conquered Islands	225	52.6	6	1.3	208	44.7	1	0.2
	British West Indies	502	148.3	-	-	407	126.9	-	-
	Foreign West Indies	21	5.1	5	1.0	-	-	5	0.8
1800	British North America	150	27.2	-	-	227	34.1	-	-
	U.S.A.	44	11.0	503	114.9	37	9.3	470	105.5
	Conquered Islands	236	54.1	5	0.5	199	51.8	1	0.2
	British West Indies	506	154.1	-	-	514	159.0	-	-
	Foreign West Indies	-	-	5	0.8	-	-	-	-
1801	British North America	220	35.6	-	-	271	43.4	-	-
	U.S.A.	74	16.4	652	145.1	75	17.4	652	145.5
	Conquered Islands	331	86.1	17	3.9	283	74.9	3	0.6

SHIPPING RETURNS - GENERAL : 1778; 1784-1801

(2) 'An account of number of vessels... including repeated voyages which entered inwards and cleared outwards in the several ports of Great Britain'

Source: P.R.O. : BT/6/141: Customs House accounts: 1780-1804

		BRITISH NORTH AMERICA		UNITED STATES OF AMERICA		BRITISH WEST INDIES		CONQUERED WEST INDIES		FOREIGN WEST INDIES	
		Ships	000 tons	Ships	000 tons	Ships	000 tons	Ships	000 tons	Ships	000 tons
1790	IN (British	199	25.0	269	56.0	516	126.7	-	-	1	0.2
	IN (Foreign	-	-	226	42.1	1	0.2	-	-	-	-
	OUT (British	362	44.2	189	40.8	438	110.3	-	-	2	0.3
	OUT (Foreign	-	-	201	36.9	-	-	-	-	-	-
1791	IN (British	239	30.5	201	44.7	532	129.6	-	-	13	2.9
	IN (Foreign	-	-	297	58.9	-	-	-	-	1	0.2
	OUT (British	369	49.3	192	43.5	459	114.1	-	-	4	0.6
	OUT (Foreign	-	-	272	52.6	-	-	-	-	-	-
1792	IN (British	204	29.2	164	35.9	555	132.1	-	-	14	2.6
	IN (Foreign	-	-	291	60.3	-	-	-	-	-	-
	OUT (British	347	48.1	176	41.5	487	122.2	-	-	4	0.5
	OUT (Foreign	-	-	265	56.2	-	-	-	-	-	-
1798	IN (British	115	17.1	18	4.1	457	128.3	198	44.2	14	3.1
	IN (Foreign	-	-	297	67.7	-	-	1	0.2	2	0.5
	OUT (British	205	27.3	29	6.4	446	124.5	229	50.6	2	0.4
	OUT (Foreign	-	-	296	69.0	-	-	-	-	2	0.5
1799	IN (British	133	21.9	27	6.6.	604	165.6	225	52.6	52	11.0
	IN (Foreign	-	-	316	69.9	-	-	6	1.3	5	1.0
	OUT (British	196	29.2	43	11.4	489	140.5	208	44.7	5	1.1
	OUT (Foreign	-	-	332	74.2	-	-	1	0.2	2	0.4
1800	IN (British	147	26.4	44	10.9	502	148.3	236	54.1	21	5.1
	IN (Foreign	-	-	503	114.9	-	-	7	1.1	3	0.5
	OUT (British	223	33.3	37	9.3	407	126.9	199	51.8	-	-
	OUT (Foreign	-	-	470	105.5	-	-	1	0.2	5	0.7

(3) Number of vessels clearing in and out, 1793 : England only

	IN		OUT			IN		OUT	
	No.	000t	No.	000t		No.	000t	No.	000t
Antigua	58	11.7	43	9.9	St. Kitts	30	6.8	45	10.8
Barbados	55	11.2	52	11.1	St. Vincent	39	8.5	25	6.2
Dominica	33	6.3	29	6.4	Tobago	10	2.2	10	2.0
Grenada	73	15.3	57	13.1	Tortola	12	2.9	15	3.2
Jamaica	257	70.1	163	48.5	Total British West Indies	590	139.6	453	114.4
Montserrat	10	1.9	8	1.6	Honduras Bay	37	8.2	6	1.3
Nevis	13	2.7	6	1.5	Foreign West Indies	16	2.6	2	0.3

Source: P.R.O. : Customs 17/15 : 1793

APPENDIX 13: SHIPPING RETURNS, 1793-4 - BY ISLANDS

Count of number of vessels... including repeated voyages, which have entered and cleared in the several British West Indies islands
January 5, 1793 - January 5, 1794

Source : Public Record Office - CUSTOMS 17/15 : 1793

		--	Antigua	Barbados	Dominica	Grenada	Jamaica	Montserrat	Nevis	St Kitts	St. Vincent	Tortola	Tobago	Total British West Ind
Great Britain	IN	No.	42	50	26	54	150	7	5	30	28	6	8	406
		000t	8.7	10.2	5.1	11.2	40.9	1.8	1.1	6.7	6.1	1.3	1.3	94.3
	OUT	No.	63	61	35	97	308	12	18	42	56	19	15	726
		000t	12.7	13.9	6.7	20.1	58.5	2.4	3.4	9.6	11.7	3.8	3.1	145.8
Ireland	IN	No.	14	8	11	4	17	-	-	3	8	-	-	65
		000t	1.9	1.1	1.6	0.4	3.0	-	-	0.4	1.1	-	-	10.5
	OUT	No.	10	4	3	6	14	1	-	2	1	-	-	41
		000t	1.2	0.4	0.3	0.7	2.1	-	-	0.2	0.1	-	-	5.1
Southern Europe & Madeira	IN	No.	4	-	10	7	2	1	-	2	3	-	2	31
		000t	0.8	-	1.5	1.1	0.5	0.1	-	0.2	0.5	-	0.2	5.0
	OUT	No.	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
		000t	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Africa	IN	No.	2	11	5	26	95	-	1	3	25	-	1	169
		000t	0.2	1.8	1.0	4.1	19.5	-	0.4	0.4	4.4	-	0.2	32.0
	OUT	No.	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	3
		000t	-	-	0.08	0.05	-	-	-	0.09	-	-	-	0.2
U.S.A. (British vessels)	IN	No.	55	43	16	41	274	6	14	22	24	1	16	512
		000t	6.6	5.7	1.8	5.6	38.5	0.7	1.2	2.8	3.1	0.3	1.9	68.4
	OUT	No.	35	26	12	17	181	4	8	9	19	-	-	311
		000t	4.0	3.2	1.5	2.2	23.2	0.4	0.8	0.9	2.1	-	-	38.2
British North America	IN	No.	20	42	13	27	51	6	1	6	17	-	-	183
		000t	1.8	4.9	1.5	2.9	5.8	0.7	0.1	0.8	1.8	-	-	20.2
	OUT	No.	17	36	10	19	54	2	1	7	14	-	-	160
		000t	1.7	4.2	1.0	1.9	6.8	0.2	-	1.0	1.5	-	-	18.3
Bahama & Bermuda	IN	No.	20	5	4	7	12	2	-	5	19	-	-	75
		000t	1.6	0.3	0.4	0.7	0.8	0.1	-	0.4	1.2	-	-	5.6
	OUT	No.	24	13	6	8	7	3	1	8	13	-	-	83
		000t	1.7	1.2	0.6	0.6	0.4	0.2	0.1	0.7	1.1	-	-	6.7
Dutch settlements	IN	No.	15	57	6	52	4	35	50	179	12	1	2	413
		000t	1.2	3.9	0.4	3.8	0.5	1.1	2.0	11.6	0.9	-	0.1	25.4
	OUT	No.	2	64	8	32	2	16	11	56	14	-	2	207
		000t	0.2	4.4	0.4	2.7	0.2	0.5	0.5	4.4	1.3	-	0.1	14.8
Danish settlements	IN	No.	7	8	2	3	-	1	-	3	2	11	-	37
		000t	0.5	0.4	0.2	0.2	-	-	-	0.3	0.1	0.7	-	2.6
	OUT	No.	5	3	1	10	1	-	1	2	-	7	1	31
		000t	0.2	0.2	-	0.9	0.1	-	-	0.2	-	0.4	0.1	2.4
French settlements	IN	No.	14	10	11	13	29	4	-	3	15	-	1	100
		000t	0.9	0.6	0.6	1.0	1.9	0.2	-	0.4	1.2	-	-	6.9
	OUT	No.	-	12	9	27	4	1	-	1	10	-	-	64
		000t	-	0.7	0.6	2.0	0.4	-	-	0.1	0.7	-	-	4.6
Spanish settlements	IN	No.	3	-	2	22	11	-	2	1	3	-	1	45
		000t	0.2	-	0.1	0.4	1.3	-	0.2	-	0.1	-	-	2.4
	OUT	No.	2	-	-	21	17	1	-	2	6	-	2	51
		000t	0.1	-	-	1.6	1.8	-	-	-	0.4	-	0.1	4.1
Swedish settlements	IN	No.	49	-	-	-	-	4	56	29	-	-	-	138
		000t	2.8	-	-	-	-	0.2	1.8	2.4	-	-	-	7.1
	OUT	No.	29	3	-	-	-	6	9	35	-	-	-	82
		000t	1.8	0.3	-	-	-	0.2	0.4	2.9	-	-	-	5.7
Honduras Bay	IN	No.	-	-	-	-	-	19	-	-	-	-	-	19
		000t	-	-	-	-	-	1.7	-	-	-	-	-	1.7
	OUT	No.	2	-	-	1	28	-	-	1	-	-	-	32
		000t	0.4	-	-	0.2	3.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.2
TOTAL	IN	No.	246	235	106	256	664	66	129	285	156	19	32	2195
		000t	27.5	29.0	14.1	31.3	114.4	5.0	6.8	26.4	20.6	2.4	3.9	281.2
	OUT	No.	189	222	85	240	647	46	49	165	134	26	20	1823
		000t	24.0	28.6	11.2	33.2	98.8	4.2	4.2	20.2	18.8	4.2	3.4	252.0
From one island to another	IN	No.	38	50	37	78	12	27	39	110	39	23	44	497
		000t	3.4	2.9	2.5	6.0	0.6	1.6	2.5	8.0	2.6	2.8	4.1	37.0
	OUT	No.	80	88	52	96	-	6	62	134	71	10	48	647
		000t	6.6	8.2	5.3	8.5	-	0.4	2.8	10.0	5.7	0.5	3.4	51.5

ship	type	dis-placement	where built	when built	voyage
Adventure	ship	180tons	Britain	-	St Kitts - Cork
Adventure	brig	130	U.S.A.	1777	Cork - Barbados
Adventure	ship	160	Poole	1765	London-St Kitts
Adventure	brig	140	Philadelphia	1781	Tortola - London
Adventure	brig	90	U.S.A.	1773	London - Barbados
Adventure	brig	110	U.S.A.	1774	Dublin - Antigua
Adventure	ship	310	Thames	174 0	London - Barbados
Aeolus	brig	130	U.S.A.	1774	Greenock-Jamaica
Agnes	brig	120	U.S.A.	1774	Lancaster-Jamaica
Akers	brig	100	Scotland	1757	Cork- St Kitts
Albion	ship	350	Bristol	1782	Bristol - Jamaica
Albion	ship	300	Thames	1774	London - Jamaica
Alexander	ship	200	Philadelphia	1769	Greenock-Jamaica
Alexander	ship	350	France	1770	London - Antigua
Alfred	ship	400	Philadelphia	1776	London - Jamaica
Alfred	ship	300	Thames	1749	London - Jamaica
Amazon	ship	350	Thames	1766	St Vincent-London
Amiable Clarissa	brig	130	U.S.A.	1777	Cork - Jamaica
Amiable Garland	brig	100	U.S.A.	1770	Cork - Tortola
Amiable Catharine	ship	300	Holland	1776	Tobago - London
Amity	brig	190	Whitehaven	1780	London - Jamaica
Amity	ship	180	Chester	1776	Liverpool-Jamaica
Amity	brig	200	Dysart	1782	Jamaica - London
Amity Hall	ship	350	Thames	1775	London - Jamaica
Anderson	brig	100	Whitehaven	1766	Greenock-St Kitts
Ann	ship	280	Bristol	1781	Bristol-Barbados
Ann	ship	300	Virginia	1763	Greenock-Antigua
Ann	ship	250	Piscatogua	1772	Bristol - Jamaica
Ann Georgiana	ship	305	Thames	1765	London - St Kitts
Ann & Mary	ship	200	-	1783	Waterford-Jamaica
Anna Bella	ship	350	Stockton	1782	London - St Kitts
Ann & Susannah	ship	460	France	1779	Liverpool-Jamaica
Antigua	brig	140	Spain	-	Greenock-Antigua
Antigua	ship	350	Liverpool	1774	London - Antigua
Antigua Packet	ship	180	Philadelphia	1781	London - Antigua
Antigua Planter	ship	300	Bristol	1774	London - Antigua
Apollo	ship	300	Workington	1781	London - Jamaica
Ariadne	ship	305	Thames	1752	Jamaica - London
Ashley	ship	300	Thames	1764	London - Jamaica
Assistance	sloop	40	Britain	-	London - Jamaica
Atalanta	ship	170	Greenock	1782	Greenock - St Kitt
Atalanta	ship	320	U.S.A.	1783	London - Tobago
Atkinson	brig	220	Whitehaven	1781	Whitehaven-Jamaica
Atlantic	ship	300	Glasgow	1778	London - Jamaica
Augustus Caesar	ship	450	Thames	1774	London - Jamaica
Aurora	brig	200	Wales	1776	London -St Vincent
Aurora	ship	200	Philadelphia	1779	Greenock-Jamaica
Aurora	snow	200	Sweden	1774	St Vincent-London
Aurora	brig	160	U.S.A.	1773	Greenock-Tortola
Active	brig	90	France	1776	Dublin-West Indie

= 50 ships

Source: Selected extract from Lloyd's Register of Shipping, 1784

Ship	type	dis-placement	where built	when built	voyage
Abby	brig	144tons	Lancaster	1787	Lancaster - Grenada
Abby	brig	154	U.S.A.	1774	Liverpool - Barbados
Active	snow	180	Lancaster	1785	Lancaster - Jamaica
Active	snow	153	Cowes	1788	London - Jamaica
Active	brig	140	Chester	1789	Liverpool - Chester
Active	snow	165	New Brunswick	1789	Bristol - Jamaica
Adamant	ship	320	Thames	1774	London - Tortola
Admiral Keppel	ship	314	U.S.A.	1779	Cork - West Indies
Aeolus	brig	153	Philadelphia	1777	Cork - Jamaica
Agenoria	ship	264	Whitby	1787	Bristol - St Vincent
Agnes	brig	189	Liverpool	1788	Liverpool - Dominica
Aid	snow	209	Shields	1785	London - Honduras
Albacore	brig	114	Britain	1791	Cork - Jamaica
Albion	ship	312	Bristol	1782	Bristol Jamaica
Albion	brig	168	Whitehaven	1786	Jamaica - Dublin
Alcyone	ship	290	Britain	1775	London - West Indies
Alert	snow	193	Liverpool	1787	Liverpool - Dominica
Alethea	snow	193	Liverpool	1792	Liverpool - Jamaica
Alexander	ship	230	Philadelphia	1769	Greenock - Jamaica
Alexander	ship	243	New York	1772	London - Honduras
Alexander	ship	304	Nova Scotia	1789	London - St Vincent
Alexandre	ship	400	Thames	1786	London - Jamaica
Alexandria	ship	157	Liverpool	1785	Liverpool - Jamaica
Alfred	ship	305	Nova Scotia	1786	London - Jamaica
Alice	brig	155	Liverpool	1792	Liverpool - Dominica
Alice	brig	115	Liverpool	1784	Lancaster - Grenada
Alice	ship	195	New England	1789	Liverpool - Antigua
Allanson	ship	182	Liverpool	1787	Liverpool - Barbados
Amelia	ship	250	Thames	1785	London - Jamaica
Amity	ship	320	Topsham	1783	London - Jamaica
Amity Hall	ship	316	Thames	1789	London - Jamaica
Ann	ship	223	Chester	1792	Liverpool - Jamaica
Ann	ship	199	Scotland	1786	Greenock - Jamaica
Ann	brig	112	France	-	Bristol - Grenada
Ann	brig	159	Liverpool	1791	Liverpool - St Vincent
Ann	ship	320	Bristol	1792	Bristol - Jamaica
Ann	ship	300	Bristol	1785	Bristol - Jamaica
Ann	ship	238	Bristol	1791	Bristol - Barbados
Ann	brig	126	Sunderland	1791	Cork - Jamaica
Ann & Susannah	ship	425	France	1789	Liverpool - Jamaica
Anna Bella	ship	308	Thames	1782	London - St Kitts
Antigua	ship	350	Liverpool	1774	London - Antigua
Apollo	brig	177	Hull	1784	London - Jamaica
Apollo	ship	171	France	-	Liverpool - St Vincent
Apollo	brig	136	Lancaster	1784	Lancaster - Barbados
Arab	ship	170	Bristol	1790	Cork - Jamaica
Arethusa	ship	233	Hull	1791	London - Jamaica
Argus	ship	320	New York	1774	Liverpool - Grenada
Ariel	ship	245	Hull	1788	Hull - Jamaica
Atalanta	brig	194	Cork	1788	London - Jamaica
Atalanta	ship	248	Newcastle	1788	London - Jamaica
Atlantic	ship	336	Dysart	1791	Greenock - Jamaica
Atlantic	ship	216	Chester	1787	Lancaster - Barbados
Atlas	ship	121	Harwick	1792	London - Grenada
Augustus Caesar	ship	500	Thames	1786	London - Jamaica
Aurora	ship	295	Chester	1793	London - St Vincent
Aurora	ship	271	Philadelphia	1779	Greenock - Jamaica
Aurora	ship	217	Lancaster	1793	Lancaster - St Kitts
Aurora	ship	209	Wales	1776	London - St Kitts
Aurora	ship	201	Cork	1791	Cork - Barbados
Aurora	ship	357	Thames	1787	London - Jamaica
Alligator	ship	305	Thames	1793	London - Jamaica
Active	sloop	41	Bristol	1794	Bristol - Nevis
Active	ship	250	France	-	London - Grenada
Anna	ship	151	Nova Scotia	1791	Bristol - Jamaica
Albion	ship	255	Newcastle	1793	London - Barbados
Albion	ship	270	Bermuda	1790	Liverpool - St Kitts
Albion	ship	325	Newcastle	1793	London - Jamaica

Source : Selected extract from Lloyd's Register of Shipping, 1794

APPENDIX 6. SHIPS ENGAGED IN CARIBBEAN TRADE : 1804

Ship	type	dis-placement	where built	when built	voyage
Abby	brig	144	Lancaster	1787	Whitehaven - Antigua
Acalus	ship	170	Yarmouth	1795	Belfast - Jamaica
Accomplish'dQuaker	snow	193	France	-	London - St Kitts
Achilles	ship	266	St John's	1800	Greenock - Jamaica
Acorn	ship	258	Whitby	1787	London - Jamaica
Acteon	ship	250	Whitby	1795	London - Jamaica
Active	ship	302	Chester	1803	Liverpool - Tobago
Active	brig	100	Newfoundland	1791	London - St Vincent
Active	ship	346	Whitby	1801	Liverpool - Jamaica
Active	brig	150	Chester	1793	Dublin - Antigua
Active	ship	255	Lancaster	1785	Liverpool - Tobago
Admiral Pakenham	brig	200	Whitby	1787	Cork - Martinique
Adventure	ship	245	Philadelphia	1794	Liverpool - Barbados
Adventure	schooner	76	U.S.A.	1797	Bristol - St Vincent
Adventure	sloop	41	Britain	-	London - Demerara
Adventure	ship	270	Scarborough	1797	London - St Vincent
Adventure	brig	80	Antigua	1793	London - Tobago
African Queen	ship	268	-	1796	Bristol - Barbados
Aguillar	ship	450	Stockworth	1801	London - Jamaica
Aid	sloop	42	Topsham	1798	London - Trinidad
Aid	brig	160	Whitby	1797	Liverpool - Dominica
Ajax	ship	215	Leith	1800	Leith - Jamaica
Albion	ship	220	Whitehaven	1800	Whitehaven - Jamaica
Albion	ship	270	Redbridge	1800	London - Martinique
Albion	ship	412	Shields	1800	London - Jamaica
Albion	ship	325	Newcastle	1792	London - Antigua
Albion	ship	370	Bristol	1798	Bristol - Jamaica
Albion	ship	334	Sunderland	1799	London - Trinidad
Albion	ship	369	Topsham	1800	London - Jamaica
Alchymist	brig	192	Pillon	1801	Liverpool - St Vincent
Alert	ship	223	Bermuda	1784	Bristol - Jamaica
Alert	ship	378	Whitby	1799	London - Jamaica
Alethea	snow	196	Liverpool	1792	Liverpool - Barbados
Alexander	ship	300	Boston	1797	London - Jamaica
Alexander	ship	191	Bristol	1792	London - Tortola
Alexandre	ship	435	Thames	-	London - Jamaica
Alfred	ship	490	Sunderland	1800	London - Jamaica
Alfred	ship	361	Greenock	1798	Greenock - Jamaica
Alfred	ship	305	Lancaster	1796	London - Jamaica
Alfred	ship	278	Newcastle	1798	London - Tobago
Alfred	ship	319	Shields	1801	London - Jamaica
Alfred	ship	338	Hull	1801	London - Dominica
Alliance	ship	258	Whitby	1784	London-Yucatan & Honduras
Alligator	ship	341	Thames	1793	London - Barbados
Amelia	ship	237	Bristol	1791	Bristol - Grenada
Amelia	ship	350	Thames	1785	London - Grenada
America	ship	279	St John's	1799	Greenock - Jamaica
American Hero	ship	283	New York	1794	Bristol - Honduras
Amiable Adelle	ship	235	France	-	Liverpool - Barbados
Amphitrite	brig	156	Appledore	1801	Cork - Jamaica
Amphitrite	brig	285	Whitby	1792	London - Tobago
Anfield	ship	340	Greenock	1796	Liverpool - Jamaica
Ann	ship	629	Batavia	1797	London - Jamaica
Ann	snow	226	Whitby	1797	London - Demerara
Ann	ship	160	Liverpool	1789	Dublin - West Indies
Ann	sloop	54	Glasgow	1800	Greenock - Tobago
Ann	ship	236	Topsham	1803	London - Jamaica
Ann	ship	300	Bristol	1792	Bristol - Barbados
Ann	ship	394	Bristol	1803	Bristol - Jamaica
Ann	ship	300	Bristol	1795	London - Jamaica
Ann	ship	198	New Brunswick	1801	London - Tobago
Ann	ship	250	France	1802	London - West Indies
Ann	ship	367	Scarborough	1796	London - Antigua
Ann	ship	311	Whitby	1799	London - St Kitts
Ann	ship	417	Greenock	1801	Greenock - Jamaica
Anna Maria	ship	304	Sweden	1795	Bristol - Antigua

APPENDIX 16: (contd.)

Ship	type	dis-placement	where built	when built	voyage
Ant	sloop	53	Cowes	1795	London - Tobago
Ant	ship	475	Spain	-	London - Barbados
Apollo	ship	320	Sunderland	1795	London - Jamaica
Apollo	ship	213	Sunderland	1790	London - St Kitts
Apollo	ship	231	Bristol	1786	Bristol - Tobago
Antelope	brig	222	Bristol	1799	London - La Guaira
Arabella	ship	286	France	-	Liverpool - West Indies
Ardent	ship	364	Plymouth	1801	Liverpool - Jamaica
Arethusa	ship	466	Whitby	1794	London - Jamaica
Argo	ship	297	Alnmouth	1799	Lancaster - Jamaica
Ariadne	ship	401	Whitby	1794	London - Jamaica
Ariel	ship	238	Whitehaven	1800	Liverpool - Nevis
Ark	ship	402	Bristol	1799	London - Barbados
Asphalon	ship	370	Newcastle	1790	London - Honduras
Aspinal	ship	197	Liverpool	1792	Dublin - Jamaica
Atalanta	ship	345	Bermuda	1799	London - Jamaica
Atalanta	snow	248	Newcastle	1783	Newcastle - Antigua
Atlantic	ship	213	Chester	1787	Lancaster - Trinidad
Atlas	sloop	58	Rochester	1795	London - Tobago
Atlas	ship	407	Newcastle	1798	London - Barbados
Atlas	ship	349	Chepstow	1797	Bristol - Barbados
Atlas	brig	244	Whitehaven	1799	Whitehaven - Jamaica
Atlas	ship	350	Shields	1800	Liverpool - Jamaica
Atlas	brig	162	Yarmouth	1798	London - Martinique
Attempt	brig	126	New Brunswick	1794	London - Trinidad
Augusta	ship	390	Shields	1800	London - Barbados
Augusta	ship	259	Whitehaven	1803	Whitehaven - Jamaica
Augusta	ship	368	Whitby	1796	London - Antigua
Augusta	ship	332	Holland	1789	London - Barbados
Augustus	ship	412	Thames	1799	London - Jamaica
Augustus Caesar	ship	457	Thames	1787	London - Jamaica
Aurora	brig	244	Sunderland	1798	London - Barbados
Aurora	ship	300	Chester	1793	Liverpool - Antigua
Aurora	ship	189	(Foreign prize)	-	Greenock - Trinidad
Aurora	ship	196	Bermuda	1794	London - Jamaica

Source: Selected extract from Lloyd's Register of Shipping, 1804.

Entries to and clearances from the Jamaican ports, 1796 - 8

NUMBER OF VESSELS

	1796									1797						1798								
	Jan	Feb	Mar	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
KINGSTON Entered	51	73	51	67	38	46	29	29	30	45	38	46	17	54	51	55	54	50	63	61	40	-	-	-
KINGSTON Cleared	50	41	53	92	44	38	32	26	27	36	31	32	24	15	42	52	45	31	75	36	46	35	61	26
PORT ANTONIO Entered	9	9	5	13	11	11	3	6	3	5	4	4	1	7	2	9	10	10	5	3	1	-	-	-
PORT ANTONIO Cleared	8	3	3	7	3	3	8	2	2	2	6	1	3	2	0	0	5	2	16	1	0	0	10	1
MONTEGO BAY Entered	9	9	12	8	12	4	6	8	2	5	7	20	6	6	15	12	14	46	9	3	4	-	-	-
MONTEGO BAY Cleared	12	7	18	38	32	8	7	12	11	6	3	9	5	4	6	21	3	8	36	6	7	4	7	5
SAVANNAH-DEL-MAR Entered	2	4	5	1	2	0	0	5	3	4	2	4	-	1	1	3	5	5	2	0	0	-	-	-
SAVANNAH-DEL-MAR Cleared	6	2	8	24	6	1	0	2	6	4	1	1	1	1	4	2	3	1	15	2	2	0	2	1
SANTA LUCEA Entered	-	-	-	1	0	0	1	2	2	0	0	4	-	-	1	4	2	5	1	-	-	-	-	-
SANTA LUCEA Cleared	3	6	7	20	1	3	2	2	3	2	3	1	2	1	0	6	3	2	8	0	2	0	2	1
TOTAL Entered	71	95	73	90	63	61	39	50	40	59	51	78	24	68	70	83	85	116	80	69	45	-	-	-
TOTAL Cleared	79	59	89	181	86	53	49	44	49	50	44	44	35	23	52	81	59	44	150	45	57	39	82	34

Source: P.R.O. : CO 142/23

(a) Returns from the Naval Office, Bridgetown, Barbados shewing entries into that port, including repeated voyages, between July 1st and September 30th, 1801

Date	Ship	Type	Dis-placement	Where from	Cargo
July	Fame	brig	95tons	Newfoundland	cod
	Pheasant	schooner	68	Newfoundland	cod
	Ranger	schooner	124	Wiscasset	lumber,shingles,staves
	Dominica Packet	ship	231	Liverpool	beef & other provisions
	Charming Eliza	ship	273	Surinam	hardwood (835 pieces)
	Leeboo	schooner	52	Alexandria	shingles,bread, corn
	Five Sisters	brig	123	Alexandria	shingles, bread
	Nereus	schooner	108	Newfoundland	cod & herring
	Clarissa	sloop	114	Wiscasset	lumber,shingles,staves & 10 spars
	Benson	ship	256	Lancaster & Cork	provisions, dry goods
	Isca	snow	157	Liverpool & Cork	provisions
	Briton	snow	217	Bristol & Cork	stores, hoops, bricks
	Eagle	brig	106	Newfoundland	cod & salmon
	Mary	schooner	68	Martinique	cocoa & coffee
	Lady Seaforth	schooner	82	Demerara	Madeira wine (transhipped)
	George	schooner	79	Surinam	coffee
	Hope	brig	118	Newfoundland	fish & firewood
	Betsy	sloop	39	Demerara	rum & coffee
	Friendship	brig	135	New London	livestock & provisions
	Arg6	brig	158	Kennebec	lumber,shingles,staves, fish
	Favorite	schooner	62	New London	oxen & provisions
	Richmond	brig	150	Portland	lumber,shingles,staves
	Lord Seaforth	schooner	41	Barbados(from the stocks)	in ballast
Aug.	Lark	brig	133	Pepperelboro	lumber,shingles,staves
	Eliza	schooner	109	Demerara	shingles, timber
	Regulator	brig	100	Halifax	lumber,fish,hoops
	Mary	sloop	70	Portland	lumber,shingles,staves
	Eliza & Mary	brig	115	Mississippi	bread & flour
	Franklin	schooner	115	Alexandria	bread & corn
	Brilliant	ship	321	Greenock	herring,soap, pork
	Polly	schooner	101	New Orleans	bread & flour
	Fame	schooner	80	New Providence	mahogany,cedar posts
	Hinds	schooner	148	Barbados(Vice-Admiralty Court)	in Ballast
	Three Brothers	sloop	63	Newfoundland	cod
	Thomas	schooner	105	Castine	lumber,shingles,staves
	Sally	brig	113	Rhode Island	lumber,livestock
	Governor Ricketts	schooner	83	Martinique	coffee, marble
	Eclipse	schooner	83	Surinam	coffee, cocoa
	Polly	schooner	73	Martinique	staves,cocoa,coffee
	Adventure	schooner	114	Surinam	coffee
	Friendship	schooner	114	Demerara	coffee, drugs,hardwood
	Harmony	schooner	99	Alexandria	shingles,staves,herring
	Sally	schooner	92	Biddeford,Maine	Lumber,shingles,staves, scantling
	Industry	brig	118	New Brunswick	lumber,shingles,staves, fish
	Linnet	sloop	67	Surinam	coffee,dry goods
	Natt	schooner	66	Martinique	wine & provisions
Sept.	Lord Seaforth	schooner	41	Demerara	shingles,cotton,coffee
	James	brig	112	New London	stores & livestock
	Emerald	ship	326	Demerara	timber
	Mark & Mary	brig	112	Kennebec	lumber,shingles,staves
	Polly	sloop	69	New London	stores & livestock
	Julia	schooner	80	Newfoundland	fish
	Plover	ship	297	Barbados(Vice-Admiralty Court)	in ballast
	Cicero	ship	429	Liverpool	provisions & stores
	Barton	ship	222	Liverpool	Provisions & stores
	Polly	schooner	73	Martinique	molasses
	George	schooner	79	Surinam	coffee & dry goods

(b) Returns from the Naval Office, Bridgetown, Barbados, shewing clearances from... between July 1st and September 30th, 1801

Date	Ship	Type	Dis-placement	Where from	Cargo
July	Margaret	schooner	103tons	Surinam	sundries
	Linnet	sloop	67	Surinam	provisions, dry goods
	Lord Duncan	brig	109	Martinique	rum & provisions
	Prude	brig	145	Martinique	sundries(part of inward cargo)
	Little John	schooner	71	Turks Is.&Rhode Is.	canvas (29 bolts)
	Eclipse	schooner	83	Surinam	stores
	Brothers	brig	72	Newfoundland	rum & molasses
	Fame	brig	95	Martinique & Newfoundland	rum
	Ranger	schooner	124	Wiscasset	rum & molasses
	Friendship	schooner	111	Demerara	dry goods
	Lucy	brig	115	Martinique & Newfoundland	sugar,rum, & molasses
	Atlas	ship	408	London	sugar
	Isle of Thanet	ship	341	London	sugar
	Trusty	ship	306	Bristol	sugar
	Betsey	snow	158	London	sugar
	Carleton	brig	130	Liverpool	sugar, rum & ginger
	Moses	schooner	138	Wiscasset	rum
	Benson	ship	256	Martinique	dry goods
	Charming Eliza	ship	273	Martinique	in ballast
	Adventure	ship	245	Liverpool	sugar
	Dominica Packet	ship	231	Liverpool	sugar
	Pheasant	schooner	68	Alexandria	sugar & ginger
	Nereus	schooner	108	Grenada	corn & cod
	Leeboo	schooner	52	St Martins	in ballast
	Mary	schooner	67	Martinique	beef, stores
	Five Sisters	brig	123	Turks Is.	flour
	Clarissa	sloop	140	Wiscasset	rum
	Favourite	schooner	62	New London	sundries
	Lord Seaforth	schooner	41	Demerara	stores,dry goods, passengers
	Betsey	sloop	39	Bermuda	sugar & rum
Aug.	George	schooner	79	Surinam	stores & dry goods
	Hope	brig	118	Quebec	sugar & rum
	Friendship	brig	135	Martinique	sundries(part of inward cargo)
	Polly	schooner	101	Baltimore	in ballast
	Hinds	schooner	148	Newfoundland	sugar, rum, molasses
	Eagle	brig	106	Newfoundland	sugar
	Argo	brig	158	Kennebec	rum
	Eliza & Mary	brig	115	Martinique	corn & flour
	Richmond	brig	150	Portland	rum
	Franklin	schooner	115	Alexandria	in ballast
	Mary	sloop	79	Portland	rum
	Adventure	schooner	114	Martinique	provisions
	Three Brothers	sloop	63	Bermuda	rum
	Lark	brig	133	Pepperelboro	rum & molasses
	Brilliant	ship	321	Liverpool	cotton
	Regulator	brig	100	New London	sugar
	Thomas	schooner	105	Castine	rum
	Harmony	schooner	99	Antigua	sundries(part of inward cargo)
	Sally	brig	113	Rhode Island	in ballast
	Governor Ricketts	schooner	83	Martinique	stores
	Polly	schooner	73	Martinique	provisions
	Eliza	schooner	109	Demerara	Limes

Date	Ship	Type	Dis-placement	Where from	Cargo
Sept.	Natt	schooner	66	Demerara	provisions & wine
	Friendship	schooner	111	Berbice & Demerara	provisions & wine
	Eclipse	schooner	83	Surinam	provisions
	Industry	brig	118	New Brunswick	sugar,rum,molasses,lime
	Sally	schooner	92	Biddeford,Maine	rum
	Fame	schooner	80	Demerara	provisions & stores
	James	brig	112	St Kitts	sundries(part of inward cargo)
	Lord Seaforth	schooner	41	Demerara	lumber, provisions
	Polly	sloop	69	New London	rum, molasses
	Two Brothers	schooner	54	St Vincent	corn
	Polly	schooner	71	Martinique	provisions & dry goods
	Mark & Mary	brig	112	Kennebec	rum
	George	schooner	79	Norfolk,W.Va	sugar & cocoa
	Plover	ship	297	Liverpool	sugar,coffee, cotton, indigo
	Barton	ship	222	Liverpool	Mahogany,Lignum vitae, coffee,cotton, hides, cocoa
	Linnet	sloop	67	Baltimore	sugar
	Lady Seaforth	schooner	82	Baltimore	sugar
	Julia	schooner	80	Baltimore	sugar
	Cicero	ship	429	Liverpool	fustick, cotton,coffee, cocoa,cabia skins, quassia bark, pepper
	Emerald	ship	326	London	sugar, cotton, coffee

Source: P.R.O. : HO 76/2 - 1801

Shipping Returns by James Laing, Assistant Naval Officer at Roseau, Dominica.

(a) Entries of British registered vessels : July - October, 1792

date	ship	type	tons	where from	cargo
July 12	Commerce	sloop	70	St Lucia	in ballast
13	William	ship	181	Lancaster & Cork	dry goods, plantation stores
13	Two Brothers	sloop	135	St Kitts	in ballast
13	Robinson	ship	183	Whitehaven	plantation stores
13	Queen Charlotte	brig	143	Lancaster & Cork	provisions, herring, stores
13	Mary	ship	148	Liverpool	lime, coals
13	Betsy	sloop	74	St.Eustatius	in ballast
14	Friends Adventure	sloop	103	Cork	provisions, dry goods
16	Lady Augusta	brig	97	Liverpool	provisions, dry goods, wine
16	Swift	schooner	49	Bay Chaleurs	fish, shingles, hoops
19	Delight	sloop	82	New Haven	livestock, hoops, staves
20	Friends	sloop	53	Guadeloupe	cotton
21	Mary	sloop	124	St Kitts	rice & flour
23	Sherborn Castle	ship	141	Africa	negroes, ivory (not to be landed)
24	Eagle	sloop	38	Barbados	provisions, herring
27	Rebecca	sloop	59	Barbados	sugar
28	Fanny	schooner	80	St Vincent	rum
30	Swift	sloop	84	Barbados	sugar
30	Stanley	schooner	50	St Lucia	cotton
30	Eclipse	schooner	74	Barbados	provisions, dry goods
30	Harlequin	sloop	46	Prince Ruperts	in ballast
Aug. 4	Industry	sloop	57	St Kitts	flour
7	Eagle	sloop	38	Barbados	beef & pork
9	Betsy	sloop	55	Newfoundland	salt fish & herring
10	Mentor	ship	136	Africa	negroes
10	Fanny	schooner	109	Africa	negroes
18	Fanny	schooner	52	St Kitts	flour
27	Endeavour	schooner	108	St Johns	boards, cod
30	Joseph & Mary	brig	164	London	plantation & Govt. stores
31	Charles Kerr	schooner	44	St Vincent	butter, linen
Sep. 3	Belmont	schooner	67	Baltimore	provisions, staves
5	Escape	schooner	29	Grenada	in Ballast
5	Stanley	schooner	50	St Lucia	in Ballast
17	Rebecca	ship	162	Barbados	porter, plantation stores
17	Little Elenor	sloop	55	Grenada	corn
19	Fanny	schooner	52	St Kitts	flour
24	Felicity	sloop	62	St Lucia	cotton
25	Ann	sloop	110	St Vincent	rice
27	General Orde	bark	142	Africa	negroes
Oct. 4	Hope	brig	137	Liverpool	cordage, wine, stores
4	Trial	brig	159	New Brunswick	boards & shingles
5	Felicity	sloop	52	St.Lucia	cotton
8	Triton	ship	180	Glasgow	porter, provisions, dry goods
10	Rebecca	sloop	59	Antigua	in ballast

(b) Clearances of British registered vessels : July - October 1792

				where bound	
July 12	Swift	sloop	84	St Vincent	sundries
12	Fanny	schooner	80	St Vincent	sundries
12	Friends	sloop	53	Antigua	in ballast
13	Two Brothers	sloop	135	St Kitts	negroes
13	Commerce	sloop	70	Cayenne	negroes
13	Betsey	sloop	74	St Eustatius	negroes
14	William	ship	181	St Kitts	provisions, dry goods
16	Joyce	brig	152	New Brunswick	naval stores

APPENDIX 19(contd.)

date	ship	type	tons	where bound	cargo
July 19	Isabella	bark	102	London	part inward cargo from Africa not landed here
20	Delight	sloop	82	Grenada	" "
21	Hannah	ship	322	London	sugar,rum, coffee,cotton
21	George & Tracy	brig	120	Nova Scotia	rum
21	Mary	sloop	124	St Kitts	in ballast
21	Africa	brig	110	Africa	sugar, rum
23	Swift	schooner	49	Bay Chaleurs	rum
23	Hopewell	brig	149	St John's	sugar
24	Harry & Eliza	ship	146	Boston	in ballast
25	Eagle	sloop	38	Barbados	in ballast
27	Rebecca	sloop	59	Barbados	in ballast
27	Sherborn Castle	ship	141	Jamaica	negroes, ivory
27	Thomas	snow	203	London	sugar,coffee,hides, cocoa
28	John	snow	141	Liverpool	coffee,cotton,cocoa
30	Fanny	schooner	80	Guadeloupe	beef & butter
31	Harlequin	sloop	46	New York	rum & limes
31	Robinson	ship	183	New York	in ballast
31	Queen Charlotte	brig	143	Lancaster	rum,cotton,hides,fustic
31	Mary	ship	148	Liverpool	sugar,rum,coffee,gum copal
31	Neptune	ship	218	Boston	sugar, rum
Aug. 1	Eclipse	schooner	74	St Eustatius	in ballast
1	Olive	brig	220	New York	sugar
1	Dominica Packet	ship	211	London	sugar,cotton,coffee, indigo
4	Swift	sloop	84	St Vincent	in ballast
4	Industry	sloop	57	St Kitts	in ballast
4	Stanley	schooner	50	St Lucia	provisions
8	William Fell	brig	80	North Carolina	in ballast
8	Eagle	sloop	38	St Thomas	in ballast
10	Favorite	brig	180	Liverpool	sugar, gum copal
10	Fanny	schooner	109	Montserrat	Part inward cargo not landed here
14	Betsey	sloop	55	Newfoundland	rum & limes
20	Fanny	schooner	52	St Kitts	in ballast
22	Mentor	ship	135	London	part inward cargo not landed here
25	Lady Augusta	brig	97	Liverpool	sugar, coffee
31	Charles Kerr	schooner	44	Antigua	in ballast
Sep. 5	Escape	schooner	29	Barbados	coffee
5	Stanley	schooner	50	St Lucia	sundry British manufactures
12	Belmont	schooner	67	Baltimore	in ballast
12	Joseph & Mary	brig	163	Baltimore	in ballast
13	Endeavour	schooner	108	St Johns	part inward cargo...
17	Little Elenor	sloop	55	Grenada	in ballast
17	Harvey	schooner	52	St Eustatius	British copper & nails
19	Fanny	schooner	52	St Kitts	in ballast
26	Felicity	sloop	62	St Lucia	in ballast
26	Ann	sloop	110	Turks Is.	in ballast
26	Rebecca	ship	162	Boston	part inward cargo...
Oct. 3	Nysus	ship	312	London	sugar,molasses,cotton, cocoa, coffee,indigo, logwood, ginger.

(c) Entries and Clearances of FOREIGN VESSELS : July - October 1792; January - July 1793

i. ENTRIES, July - October, 1792

date	ship	nationality & type	tons	where from	cargo
July 11	Belle Creole	French schooner	6	Marie Galante	cotton
11	Revenge	French sloop	20	Guadeloupe	cotton
18	La Fortune	French schooner	15	Guadeloupe	cotton
18	Belle Creole	French schooner	6	Marie Galante	cotton
20	Emanuel	Spanish schooner	50	Oronoko	hides (2,200)
21	Pacquet	French schooner	12	Martinique	cotton

date	ship	nationality & type	tons	where from	cargo
July 23	Trois Enfants	French sloop	20	Martinique	cotton
23	Neptune	French sloop	15	St Lucia	cotton
23	Hazard	French sloop	15	Martinique	cotton
27	Catharine	French schooner	20	Guadeloupe	hardwood
27	Rosario	Spanish schooner	55	Oronoko	cotton,gum algarabo
30	Neptune	French sloop	25	St Lucia	cotton
30	Dunkerque	French sloop	15	Marie Galante	cotton
30	Betsy	Dutch sloop	37	St Eustatius	mahogany
30	Brigand	French sloop	25	St Lucia	cotton
30	Venturier	French sloop	15	Guadeloupe	cotton
31	Vanquier	French sloop	15	Marie Galante	cotton
Aug. 3	Nostra Signora de la Reta	Spanish schooner	35	Cumanas	mules,cotton, cocoanut
5	Dendonne	French sloop	30	Guadeloupe	cotton
6	Nieuve	Spanish schooner	52	Oronoko	gum algaraba,indigo
8	Revenge	French sloop	15	Marie Galante	bullocks
9	Marie	French schooner	35	Cayenne	cocoa,cotton,turtles
10	Intrepide	French sloop	10	Marie Galante	cotton
Sep. 6	Rosette	French schooner	30	Martinique	indigo,Campeachy logwood (15 tons)
Oct. 3	Usage	French sloop	6	Martinique	cotton
5	Bourgeois	French schooner	5	Trinidad	hides
7	Dorade	French sloop	15	Guadeloupe	cotton

ii. CLEARANCES. July - October, 1792

July 12	Julie	French schooner	15	Martinique	beef
13	Brizard	French sloop	20	St Lucia	butter
16	Neptune	French sloop	15	St Lucia	butter
17	Dauphin	French sloop	15	St Lucia	herring
18	Belle Creole	French schooner	5	Marie Galante	herring; candles
18	Lafortune	French schooner	15	Martinique	butter
20	Vanquier	French sloop	20	Marie Galante	beef & butter
23	Dauphin	French sloop	15	Martinique	beef
23	Catherine	French schooner	25	Martinique	butter
30	Hazard	French sloop	15	Guadeloupe	wine
31	Dunkerque	French sloop	15	Marie Galante	beef & butter
31	Labrieure	French schooner	20	Guadeloupe	porter & dry goods
31	Brigand	French sloop	25	Guadeloupe	butter
Aug. 3	Belle Rosette	French schooner	15	Martinique	butter & beef
3	Vengeance	French sloop	20	Marie Galante	pork,butter & beef
8	Nieuve	Spanish schooner	52	Oronoko	beef
9	Vanquier	French sloop	20	Guadeloupe	butter & beef
10	Intrepid	French sloop	10	Marie Galante	dry goods
11	Belle Rosalie	French schooner	15	Martinique	butter & beef
22	Rose	French schooner	4	Guadeloupe	20 negroes
22	Marie Catherine	French schooner	15	Martinique	butter
25	Mercury	French sloop	25	Martinique	butter
30	Rosette	French schooner	15	Martinique	porter
Sep. 7	Rosette	French schooner	15	Martinique	wine
8	Marie	French schooner	3	Guadeloupe	butter
17	Catharine	French schooner	25	Martinique	porter
17	Elizabeth	French sloop	15	Guadeloupe	porter,dry goods
19	Rose	French schooner	20	Guadeloupe	candles
Oct. 8	Dorade	French sloop	30	Guadeloupe	beef & porter

iii. ENTRIES. January - April, 1793

Jan. 21	Lorrasiana	Spanish schooner	20	Barcelona	20 mules
21	Hermione	French sloop	20	St Lucia	cocoa
22	San Juan	Spanish schooner	22	Caracas	indigo
28	Courrieur	French sloop	25	Guadeloupe	cotton
31	Marie	French sloop	30	St Thomas	cotton
Feb. 2	Courrieur	French sloop	25	St Eustatius	cotton
2	Lafortune	French sloop	15	Guadeloupe	cedar
2	N.S. de la Reta	Spanish schooner	50	Oronoko	cotton & mules
25	Charmant	French sloop	15	Marie Galante	cotton
Mar. 8	Spys	French sloop	10	St Lucia	cotton
Apl. 1	Seraphine	Spanish schooner	18	Barcelona	21 mules

date	ship	nationality & type	tons	where from	cargo
Apl. 3	Rosiario	Spanish schooner	55	Oronoko	gum algaraba
3	Rosalie	Spanish schooner	62	Oronoko	60 oxhides

iv. CLEARANCES. January - April. 1793

Jan. 12	Industrie	French schooner	25	St Lucia	sundry dry goods
19	Amirable Charlotte	French schooner	30	Saintes	butter, fish
19	Venus	French schooner	4	Guadeloupe	porter
19	Rosette	French schooner	15	Guadeloupe	sundry dry goods
21	Catherine	French schooner	20	Guadeloupe	beef & butter
21	Marie	French schooner	15	Guadeloupe	butter
28	Berger	French schooner	25	Martinique	butter
28	Ann Charlotte	French schooner	30	Martinique	beef & butter
28	St Charles	French sloop	20	Guadeloupe	sundry dry goods
31	Belle Creole	French schooner	30	Marie Galante	butter & porter
Feb. 4	Hermione	French sloop	20	St Lucia	butter & porter
14	Marie Catherine	French schooner	15	Saintes	butter
19	Hope	French sloop	50	St Croix	butter
20	Berneuse	French schooner	4	Guadeloupe	candles
20	Belle Jeanne	French schooner	5	Martinique	butter
28	Loreto	Spanish schooner	25	Cumanas	41 mules
(Mar.)	Republicain	French schooner	25	Guadeloupe	butter & beef
	Rosalie	Spanish schooner	62	Oronoko	Osnaburgs (60 bolts)
	Industry	Swedish sloop	25	St Bartholomews	hams
(Apl.)	Seraphim	Spanish schooner	18	Barcelona	in ballast
	Rosalie	Spanish schooner	28	Oronoko	Osnaburgs

v. CLEARANCES. April - July. 1793

Apl. 10	Rosalie	Spanish schooner	30	Oronoko	Osnaburgs, hats
11	Elizabeth	Danish sloop	61	St Croix	rum
11	Industry	French sloop	45	St Bartholomews	in ballast
12	Cayerreux Packet	Swedish sloop	45	Trinidad	in ballast
13	Sylph	Swedish sloop	46	St Bartholomews	butter
May 9	Delaide	Danish schooner	16	Trinidad	provisions
14	Elizabeth	Danish sloop	61	St Croix	stores
23	Swallow	Dutch sloop	60	Demerara	provisions
23	Ranger	Dutch schooner	22	St Martin	provisions
23	Felix	Dutch schooner	40	Demerara	in ballast
June 4	St Esperance	French schooner	6	Case Navire	in ballast
4	Ranger	Dutch schooner	22	St Eustatius	in ballast
6	Ranger	Dutch schooner	22	St Eustatius	flour, butter
7	Elizabeth	Danish sloop	61	Demerara	flour
7	Harriet	Dutch sloop	80	Demerara	in ballast
8	Rosaire	French schooner	60	Arico	negroes,dry goods
11	Esperance	French sloop	6	St Kitts	in ballast
11	Cayerreux Packet	Swedish sloop	45	Case Navire	French royalists
14	Sylph	Swedish sloop	46	St Bartholomews	butter, dry goods
18	St Joseph	French sloop	56	Case Navire	in ballast
23	Elizabeth	Danish sloop	61	St Martins	in ballast
25	Republican	Dutch sloop	25	St Martins	in ballast
27	Diamond	Dutch schooner	40	Demerara	in ballast
July 1	Sophia	Dutch schooner	25	Demerara	in ballast
5	Industry	French sloop	10	Demerara	in ballast

Source: P.R.O. : HO 76/2 - 1792 to 1793

APPENDIX 20. COLONIAL SHIPPING RETURNS - (4) : GRENADA

(i) Shipping returns of Naval Office, St George's, Grenada (Joseph Beete) shewing:- entries into, January 1st - March 31st, 1795.

date		ship	tons	where from	cargo
January	2	Postchaise	65	Martinique	herring
	7	Flan Flan	47	St Lucia	in ballast
	7	Commerce	70	Demerara	corn & lime
	7	Flying Fish	184	Madeira	wine
	7	Mercury	26	Martinique	provisions & stores
	14	Lady Hammond	61	Demerara	cotton
	16	Union	279	St Lucia	sugar & cotton
	17	George	102	Newfoundland	cod
	17	Fly	12	Martinique	in ballast
	22	Commerce	70	Demerara	cotton
	22	Rambler	102	Martinique	pork
	23	Erskine	160	New Brunswick	boards & planks
	26	Mercury	26	Martinique	bread
	31	Lady Hammond	113	Demerara	cotton
	31	Triall	54	Demerara	cotton
February	2	Lady Hammond	113	Demerara	cotton
	3	Eliza	100	Isles de Los	new negroes, ivory, beeswax
	5	Pegasus	140	Tobago	in ballast
	5	Speedwell	95	Tobago	rum
	5	Good Intent	135	Angola	new negroes, ivory
	6	Roman Emperor	280	Dominica	wine
	7	Commerce	70	Demerara	cotton
	10	Fame	218	Greenock	plantation stores, provisions, dry goods
	11	Betsey	137	Wilmington	lumber, shingles
	12	Endeavour	75	Martinique	provisions
	12	Catherine & Eliza	119	Madeira	wine
	12	Chatworth	132	Lancaster	plantation stores, provisions, dry goods
	18	Lady Hammond	113	Demerara	cotton
	19	Rambler	102	Demerara	cotton
	20	Hobby Horse	29	London	bread, bricks, staves
	20	Mars	121	Bermuda & Barbados	provisions, stores, shingles, staves
	24	Fanny	36	Gambia	new negroes, beeswax, screvillas
	24	Triall	54	Demerara	cotton
	24	Marianne	331	Trinidad	lime, coffee
	25	Long Island Packet	47	New Providence	stores, incl. 21 cotton gins
	28	Three Friends	58	Trinidad	staves, rice
	28	Sally	29	Tobago	in ballast
March	2	Lady Hammond	61	Demerara	cotton
	5	Britannia	72	Oronoque	livestock
	10	John	65	Martinique	hardwood & staves
	10	Rambler	102	Demerara	cotton
	10	Huntingdon	67	Martinique	empty rum puncheons
	15	Commerce	70	Demerara	cotton
	16	Harcum	80	Savannah	staves, shingles, boards, ranging timber
	17	Phynn	404	Guadeloupe	in ballast
	24	Industry	91	Port Glasgow	provisions, dry goods, stores

(ii) Shipping returns... shewing clearances from, January 1st - March 31st 1795.

				where bound	
January	3	Britannia	72	Oronoko	in ballast
	6	Postchaise	65	St Lucia	provisions, fish, stores
	7	Mercury	26	Martinique	in ballast
	7	Commerce	70	Barbados	65 new negroes
	8	Flan Flan	47	Berbice	60 new negroes
	10	Triall	54	Laguan Is.	provisions, dry goods
	12	London	302	Martinique	provisions, dry goods
	17	Lady Hammond	61	Laguan Is.	provisions
	23	Fly	12	St Lucia	dry goods

APPENDIX 20(contd.)

date	ship	tons	where bound	cargo
January 23	Commerce	70	Laguan Is.	110 seasoned negroes
26	Rambler	102	Crab Is.	70 new negroes
27	Mercury	26	Martinique	wine
31	Speedwell	90	Martinique	in ballast
31	Mary	289	Martinique	provisions,dry goods, wine
February 2	Lady Hammond	113	Laguan Is.	bagging
3	Triall	54	Laguan Is.	in ballast
6	Speedwell	90	Trinidad	in ballast
6	Pegasus	140	Martinique	rum
7	Mary	57	Trinidad	50 new negroes, provisions,dry goods
7	Lady Hammond	61	Laguan Is.	55 new negroes,cotton
7	Mary	50	Laguan Is.	in ballast
9	Union	279	Greenock	sugar,cotton,indigo
9	Mary	171	Liverpool	sugar,cotton,indigo, hides, gum copal
10	Commerce	70	St Lucia	cotton
17	Endeavour	75	Martinique	rum
20	Rambler	102	Laguan Is.	in ballast
25	Lady Hammond	113	Martinique	rum
25	Aurora	196	Martinique	rum
28	Peggy	156	London	sugar,cotton,coffee, cocoa
28	Sally	29	Tobago	bricks,dry goods
March 9	Lady Hammond	61	Laguan Is.	60 new negroes
10	Triall	54	Laguan Is.	dry goods,plantation stores
11	Rambler	102	Tobago	in ballast
21	Huntingdon	67	Martinique	rum
28	Britannia	72	Oronoko	dry goods

(iii) ..American vessels entered ... January 1st - March 31st 1795.

January 16	John & Martha	196	Norfolk,W.Va	corn,shingles,staves
22	Commerce	98	New York	staves,heading,meal
27	Phoenix	101	Kennabec	lumber,staves,shingle
27	Betsey	111	Boston	lumber,staves
31	Nancy	90	Philadelphia	provisions
February 2	Sally	64	New Haven	provisions
3	Betsey	80	Baltimore	provisions & shingle
4	Matilda	122	Alexandria	provisions,shingles & staves
9	Ranger	115	Penobscot	boards,staves & 12 spars
9	Sally	85	Charlestown	rice,shooks,staves
11	William	144	Union River	lumber,staves & 18 spars
12	Three Brothers	123	New London	livestock,staves, provisions
16	Grace	75	North Carolina & Trinidad	scantling,shingles, staves
19	Catherine	87	Trinidad	boards,planks,shooks
20	Sally	121	Philadelphia	flour,nankeen
21	Hawk	68	Trinidad	provisions
25	John	75	Alexandria	provisions & shingle

Source: P.R.O. : HO 76/part 1 - 1795

APPENDIX 21: COLONIAL SHIPPING RETURNS - (5) : St VINCENT

Shipping Returns from the Naval Office, Georgetown, St Vincent (Walter Walters), January - April, 1787

(a) ENTRIES

i. From British West Indies

date	ship	type	tons	where from	cargo
January 15	Stanley	schooner	50	Antigua	provisions, negroes
22	Swift	sloop	52	Barbados	provisions
23	Swift	schooner	62	Grenada	in ballast
26	Tom	sloop	54	Grenada	in ballast
27	Adonis	schooner	71	Grenada	negroes
29	Bess	sloop	63	Grenada	herring
29	Molly	sloop	30	Bermuda	logwood, lime
February 14	Polly	sloop	45	Carriacou	in ballast
19	Standard	sloop	44	Bermuda	empty casks
22	Swift	schooner	62	Antigua	oats, linen
26	Nancy	schooner	11	St Kitts	in ballast
March 12	Jean-Ann	sloop	88	Grenada	lumber
12	Betsey & Ann	sloop	50	Grenada	rum
15	Hermit	cloop	42	Grenada	mules
23	Walter	brig	170	Grenada	in ballast
24	Experiment	sloop	52	Antigua	in ballast
28	Crowlane	sloop	58	Bermuda	lime
29	Swift	schooner	62	Antigua	Irish linen

ii. From Foreign West Indies

January 8	Adventure	schooner	30	St Lucia	livestock, cotton
15	Bess	schooner	65	St Eustatius	lumber, staves
17	Adonis	schooner	30	Martinique	lumber, shingles, staves, scantling
22	Two Friends	brig	60	Guadeloupe	lumber, staves
29	Polly	brig	80	St Eustatius	lumber, shingles, staves
February 5	Bess	schooner	85	St Lucia	lumber, shingles, staves
7	Plumper	sloop	30	Trinidad	in ballast
10	Betsey	schooner	84	St Eustatius	lumber, shingles
14	Plumper	sloop	46	Martinique	in ballast
22	Little Ben	schooner	30	St Lucia	lumber
26	Apollo	sloop	64	Martinique	lumber
March 1	Adventure	schooner	30	St Lucia	cotton
9	Plumper	sloop	46	Trinidad	in ballast
10	Bess	schooner	85	St Lucia	lumber, hoops
11	Colin	sloop	103	Tobago	lumber, shingles, scantling
12	Polly	sloop	45	St Lucia	livestock, cotton
12	Eagle	schooner	32	St Lucia	cotton, grain
26	Eagle	schooner	32	St Lucia	cotton, grain
April 2	Plumper	sloop	46	Trinidad	in ballast
2	Liberty	sloop	74	St Eustatius	in ballast
3	Adonis	schooner	71	St Eustatius	lumber, shingles, staves

iii. From Britain and Africa

January 15	Diligence	sloop	60	Gweek	provisions, cod, coals
20	Tom	ship	163	Lancaster & Cork	beef & pork, dry goods, apparel
22	St Vincent	ship	343	London	oats, hoops, linen, bricks
27	Sugar Cane	ship	362	London	oats, provisions, wine, herring
27	Zephyr	ship	377	London & Cork	provisions, hoops, fish, firearms
29	Lucretia	ship	231	Greenock	herring (1100 barrels)
31	Parr	snow	132	Bristol & Cork	provisions
31	Brothers	ship	100	Africa	negroes, ivory, gum copal beeswax
31	Hannah	ship	120	Africa	negroes, ivory, palm oil, pepper

APPENDIX 21(contd.)

date		ship	type	tons	where from	cargo
February	2	Isabella	ship	262	Liverpool	provisions, wine, hoops
	2	Little Pearl	brig	72	Africa	negroes, ivory
	3	Backhouse	brig	174	Liverpool	provisions, cordage, Madeira
	9	Lord Stanley	ship	150	Africa	negroes, ivory, ebony, beeswax
	9	Williams	ship	247	London	provisions, wine
	12	Kingstown	brig	234	Greenock & Cork	provisions, hoops, herring, stores
March	10	Eliza	brig	133	Madeira	Madeira
	19	Harmony	ship	323	Newcastle	fish, oats, coals, masts & spars
April	2	Fanny	ship	75	Africa	negroes

iv - v. From United States and British North America

January	16	Betsey	brig	75	Halifax	fish & lumber
February	6	Brothers	brig	60	Halifax	fish
February	14	Colin	sloop	60	Philadelphia	provisions, staves (4000)
February	19	Christopher	ship	242	New York	bread, flour, lumber
February	23	Two Friends	sloop	45	New York	livestock, lumber

(b) CLEARANCES

i. For Britain

					where to	
February	18	Hannah	ship	120	Liverpool	palm oil, ivory (from Africa)
	22	Little Pearl	brig	72	Bristol	ivory (from Africa)
March	7	Brothers	ship	100	Bristol	ivory, gum copal, palm oil (Africa)
	10	Diligence	sloop	60	London	sugar, cotton
	12	Betsey	brig	110	London	sugar, coffee, cotton
	15	Isabella	ship	232	Liverpool	sugar, coffee, cotton
	17	Lord Stanley	ship	150	Liverpool	wax, ivory, gum, ebony (Africa)
	20	Good Intent	ship	293	London	sugar, cotton

ii. For United States and British North America

February	14	Lucretia	sloop	231	Philadelphia	rum
March	23	Colin	sloop	103	Philadelphia	rum
March	24	Betsey	brig	75	Halifax	rum, coffee

iii. For British West Indies

January	11	Adventure	schooner	30	Dominica	provisions, nails
	17	Stanley	schooner	50	Antigua	in ballast
	22	Adonis	schooner	71	Grenada	in ballast
	24	Swift	schooner	62	Grenada	provisions, dry goods, apparel
	27	Tom	sloop	54	Grenada	provisions, fish
	27	Adonis	schooner	71	Dominica	in ballast
	31	Bess	sloop	63	Grenada	in ballast
	31	Swift	sloop	53	Barbados	cocoa, fish, candles
February	1	Polly	sloop	45	Dominica	provisions, apparel
	6	Backhouse	brig	174	Grenada	butter, beef
	13	Betsey	schooner	84	Dominica	corron, beef
	15	Molly	sloop	30	Carriacou	negroes, flour, candles
	24	Little Ben	schooner	30	Grenada	salt, fish
	26	Bess	schooner	85	Dominica	herring
	27	Pan	snow	132	St Kitts	in ballast
	27	Nancy	schooner	28	St Kitts	in ballast
March	3	Brothers	brig	60	Dominica	fish
		Jean-Ann	sloop	88	Grenada	herring

APPENDIX 21(contd.)

date		ship	type	tons	where to	cargo
March	17	Hermit	sloop	42	Grenada	in ballast
	17	Swift	schooner	62	Antigua	butter,beef,candles
	21	Apollo	sloop	67	Grenada	in ballast
	24	Betsey & Ann	sloop	50	Bermuda	sugar, rum, canvas
	26	Eagle	schooner	32	Grenada	in ballast
	27	Two Friends	sloop	45	New Providence	rum
	28	Experiment	sloop	52	Antigua	in ballast
April	2	Plumper	sloop	46	Jamaica	flour (200 barrels)
iv. For Foreign West Indies						
January	6	Adonis	schooner	30	Martinique	in ballast
	14	Liberty	sloop	25	St Eustatius	in ballast
	29	Bess	schooner	85	St Lucia	in ballast
February	8	Plumper	sloop	46	Martinique	negroes
	13	Resource	schooner	70	Tobago	herring
	14	Plumper	sloop	46	Trinidad	negroes, beef
	26	Colin	sloop	103	Tobago	in ballast
March	9	Plumper	sloop	46	Trinidad	beef, provisions
	13	Eagle	schooner	32	St Lucia	in ballast
	22	Polly	sloop	45	St Lucia	in ballast
April	5	Apollo	sloop	48	Martinique	in ballast
	11	Bess	schooner	85	St Lucia	in ballast

A P P E N D I X 22.

Decree of French National Convention of January 31st, 1793, sanctioning Privateering.

'Article 1. Les citoyens français pourront armer en course.

Article 2. Le Ministre de la Marine pour accélérer les armements en course, s'ils on lieu, délivrera des lettres de marque ou permissions en blanc d'armer en guerre et courir sur les ennemis de la République. Ces permissions seront conformés au modèle annexé au présent décret.

Article 3. Ces lettres ou permissions en blanc, signées du Ministre, seront envoyées par lui aux directoires des districtes maritimes, qui ne pourront les délivrer que sous leur responsabilité, et à la charge de prévenir exactement le Ministre de leur livraison.

Article 4. Il ne pourra être employé sur les bâtiments en course qu'un sixième des matelots classés en état de servir la République. Pour cet effet les préposés aux classes ne pourront recevoir d'enrôlements, ni délivrer de permis d'embarquer pour la course qu'autant que le nombre des matelots employés à ce service n'excédera pas le sixième des gens classés de leur arrondissement. Ils seront ainsi que les armateurs responsables de toute contravention à cette loi.

Article 5. Les chefs, souschefs préposés aux classes, et les capitaines des bâtiments de la République ne pourront dans aucun cas forcer les capitaines des bâtiments en course à en débarquer aucun matelot, qu'autant que le nombre de ceux classés excéderait la proportion determinée par l'article ci-dessus.'

(reprinted in: NORMAN, C.B. 'The corsairs of France', appendix X, p. 404).

APPENDIX 23

List of British merchant ships, bound to and from Jamaica, captured by privateers, January 1st, 1795 to January 1st, 1796.

(extracted from issues of the Kingston "ROYAL GAZETTE" and reproduced in the letter of Simon Taylor, esq., of Jamaica, to Messrs. Fisher & Hibbert, London, by the GRANTHAM packet, dated January 30th 1796. (Spencer Papers, I, 251 - 254)

Amphitrite
Anna (ship 151t. b: Nova Scotia 1791)
Alligator (ship. 305t. b: Thmes 1793)
Argus sloop (320t. b: New York 1774)
Alfred ship (305t. b: Nova Scotia 1786)
Alexander (ship 220t. b: Philadelphia 1769
Albion (brig 168t. b: Whitehaven 1786)
Ark
Albion ship (312t. b: Bristol 1782)
Abercorn brig

Belle (brig 173t. b: Greenock 1784)
Bellona
Bellona (ship 240. b: Thames 1786)
Bellmount
Betsy (? ship 335t. b: Thames 1782)
Betty Cathcart (ship 270t. b: Greenock 1787)
Britannia (? ship 355t. b: Yarmouth 1789)

Carrier brig (186t. b: America 1773)
Caesar brig (116t. b: Newcastle 1784)
Caledonia
Charles
Chaser ship (201t. b: Philadelphia 1791)
Cleopatra
Courtney brig (125t. b: America 1792)
Countess of Eglinton (136t. b: Saltcoats 1785)
Curlew schooner

Dart
Diana (ship 353t. b: Bristol 1794)
Dorset ship (274t. b: Bristol 1794)
Douglass (ship 300t. b: Shields 1786)
Druid (ship 287t. b: Bristol 1777)
Dunmore

APPENDIX 23 continued

Eagle (ship 146t. b: Portland 1788)
Eagle schooner (70t. b: Jamaica 1789)
Edward (ship 308t. ex French)
Eliza brig
Eliza (ship 156t. b: Rhode Island 1769)
Eliza
Elizabeth (ship 280t. b: Greenock 1784)
Esther (ship 220t. b: Bristol 1787)

Favorite snow (120t. b: Nova Scotia 1789)
Fame (ship 289t. b: Bristol 1781)
Fanny (ship 256 t. b: Greenock 1792)
Firn
Fisher ship 205t. b: Liverpool 1786)
Flora (ship 249 t. b: Glasgow 1791)
Flying Fish
Fortitude sloop (181t. b: Britain 1775)
Fryall

George brig (102t. b: America 1789)
George (ship 161t. b: Lancaster 1787)
George
Gascoigne (ship 223t. b: Liverpool 1791)
General Mathews (ship 351t. ex French)
Glasgow (? ship 220t. b: Philadelphia 1791)
Gibraltar sloop
Grenville (ship 250t. b: Stockton 1783)
Grenville schooner

Hawke ship
Hawke (brig 263t. b: Whitehaven 1785)
Hibberts ship (405t. b: Thames 1784)
Hodge (ship 275t. b: Philadelphia)
Hope brig (145t. b: New Brunswick)
Hope ship
Hope (sloop 101t. b: Scotland 1777)

Industry sloop
Industry

Jamaica sloop (240t. b: Liverpool 1793)
Jamaica packet (134t. b: Shields 1791)
Jamaica ship (458t. b: Bristol 1790)
Jane ship (400t. b: Liverpool 1778)
Jane
Jennie (schooner 46t. b: Le Havre 1791)
Jessie ship
John
John & Prudence

Kent ship
Kitty

Little Ann
Little Jane (brig 165t. b: Liverpool 1785)
Lord Sheffield (ship 350t. b: Ipswich 1789)
Lovely Peggy (ship 197t, b: America)
Lucy schooner (139t. b: Chepstow 1782)

Margaret (ship 204t. b: Boston 1770)
Maria (ship 400t. b: Whitby 1781)
Maria (schooner 72t. b: St. Johns 1788)
Maria
Mary brig (126t. b: Nova Scotia 1786)
Mary (ship 300t. b: N. Brunswick 1792)
Mary
Mary Ann brig (186t. b: Philadelphia)
Mary Ann brig
Martha
Mermaid ship (254t. b: Philadephia)
Mermaid sloop
Mermaid
Mercury schooner
Minerva (brig 152t. b: Philadelphia 1782)
Minerva
Molly (brig 114t. b: Whitehaven 1779)
Monmouth (ship 320t. b: Wales 1783)

New Albion (ship 230t. b: Hull 1786)
New Hope schooner
Nelly (ship 260t. b: Chester 1784)
Norfolk

Oeolus ship (159t. b: Liverpool 1787)
Orient ship (262t. b: Whitby 1792)

Patomac (ship 212t. b: Glasgow 1768)
Peggy (? ship 202t. b: America 1775)
Phoebe Ann (ship 235t. b: Liverpool 1792)
Phoenix (ship 573t. b: Thames 1790)
Phynn ship
Pomona
Port-au-Prince Packet (446t. ex French)
Prince William Henry packet (283t. b: Whitby 1780)
Prince William Henry (ship 202t. b: Swansea 1784)
Providence

APPENDIX 23 continued

Ranger	schooner
Resolution	(ship 230t. b: Bristol 1770)
Rosina	
Sally	(? ship 300t. b: Stockton 1785)
Satellite	sloop
St. Joseph	sloop
St Thomas	(ship 285t. b: Bristol 1768)
Sophia	(ship 291t. b: Severn 1788)
Surprise	sloop
Susan	sloop
Susan	
Swally	
Thames	ship (360t. b: Thames 1784)
Thomas & Henry	(ship 153t. b: Chester 1770)
Top Lady	brig
Trimmer	(brig 128t. b: Bermuda 1786)
Triton	(ship 210t. b: Newfoundland 1782)
Two Maries	
Urania	ship (244t. b: Whitby 1792)
William	sloop
William	brig (147. b: N. Brunswick 1789)
William	brig
William	(ship 350t. b: Thames 1775)
William Pitt	brig
Wey	schooner
Yelverton	brig

Total = 159 & 16 un-named vessels (5 ships; 3 shallops; 3 brigs; 2 sloops; 2 schooners; one snow).

NOTE 1. The main entries comprise the information published in the Kingston "Royal Gazette" and in Simon Taylor's letter.

2. The entries in brackets comprise additional information obtained from LLOYD'S REGISTER of 1794.

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(1) ADM. 1: IN-LETTERS

- Admirals' Despatches: Jamaica Station

ADM 1/244.	1789 - 1792	Affleck, Rowley, Ford, Inglefield, Murray.
1/245	1793 - 1794	Ford.

ADM 1/246	1795	William Parker.
1/247	1796	Hyde Parker, Pole, Bligh, Duckworth.
1/248	1797 - 1798	Hyde Parker.

- Admirals' Despatches: Leeward Islands station

ADM 1/315	1789 - 1793	Laforey (I).
1/316	1793 - 1794	Gardner, Jervis.
1/317	(1794 - 1795 (1795 - 1796	Caldwell. Laforey (II).
1/318	1796	Christian, Harvey.
1/319	1796	Harvey.
1/320	1797	Harvey.
1/321	1798	Harvey.

1/3992	Letters from Lloyd's, 1793 - 1804
1/4331 - 32	Letters from the War Office, 1795 - 1798
1/5179	Orders in Council, 1793 - 1794

(2) ADM. 2: OUT-LETTERS

ADM 2/123 - 25	Orders and Instructions, December 1792 - April 1794
2/935	Secretary's Letters to commanders-in-chief at stations abroad: Leeward Islands, 1795 - 1808
2/939	Ibid.: Jamaica, 1795 - 1807
2/1097 - 8	Letters relating to Convoys, 1793 - 1796.

(3) ADM 7: MISCELLANEA

ADM 7/60 Register of applications for Convoys, 1794 - 95

7/67 Register of correspondence concerning disposition and convoys, 1795 - 1796

7/354 - 55 List of Prizes captured, 1793 - 1802

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(4) ADM. 8: LIST BOOKS

ADM 8/68 - 76 Ship List Books, 1792 - 1798

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(5) ADM. 49: ACCOUNTANT-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT

ADM 49/96 Papers relating to hired ships, 1793 - 1815

49/103 Papers relating to signals for ships under convoy

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(6) ADM. 50: ADMIRALS' JOURNALS

ADM 50/33 Laforey, 1795 - 1796

50/61 Gardner, 1793 - 1796

50/62 William Parker, 1794 - 1795

50/65 Hyde Parker, 1796 - 1798

50/78 Christian, 1795 - 1796

50/92 Laforey, 1790 - 1793

50/94 Ford, 1792 - 1795

50/107 Harvey, 1796 - 1798

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(7) ADM. 106: NAVY BOARD PAPERS

ADM 106/1985 IN-letters from Antigua yard, 1795 - 1804

106/2032 IN-letters from Jamaica yard, 1790 - 1805

106/3102 Regulations for Foreign yards, 1797

(b) PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE - COLONIAL OFFICE RECORDS

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CO 27/14 Bahamas. Shipping returns, 1784 - 1813

CO 33/18 Barbados. Shipping returns, 1781 - 1806
33/20 Ibid ... 1786 - 1806

CO 71/29 Dominica. Original correspondence, Secretary-of-State, 1796 - 1797

76/5 } Dominica. Shipping returns, 1788 - 1805
76/6 }

CO 101/33 } Grenada. Original correspondence, Secretary-of-
101/35 } State, 1792 - 1794; 1796 - 1798

CO 137/85-86 } Jamaica. Original correspondence ... and shipping
137/90-98 } returns, 1783 - 1784 and 1791 - 1797

142/23 Jamaica. Shipping returns, 1796 - 1798

CO 152/69 } Leeward Islands. Original correspondence ...
152/74-79 } 1790; 1793 - 1799

CO 260/13 St. Vincent. Original correspondence ... 1794 - 96

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